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1 EASTERN INTERIOR FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE
2 REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

3
4 Fairbanks, Alaska
5 March 7, 2001
6 9:00 o'clock a.m.

7
8
9 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

10
11 Gerald Nicholia
12 Craig Fleener
13 David James
14 Charles Miller
15 Jim Wilde
16
17 Coordinator; Donald Mike

P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I'd like to call this meeting to order.

MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, yesterday we completed Regional Council member's report and today we're at Item No. VII on the agenda, 2000 Annual Report and review and the 805 letter.

Mr. Chair, the 805 letter that we submitted to the Board is on Tab D. The 805 letter was basically going over the proposals that were submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board and there's a list of proposals that the Board took action on at their December meeting. We can go over each proposal if it's the Council's wishes. Mr. Chair, do you want me to go over the proposals? The 805 letter under Tab D, it's towards the back.

CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think we already went over that.

MR. MIKE: Okay, we can go ahead with the annual report. The annual report, at the last meeting in Tanana, the Council went over the annual report items and I tried to capture the main points on the annual report that the Council discussed last meeting. There's a draft -- I provided a copy to the Council members, the draft annual report, the annual report topics that were discussed at the Tanana meeting last fall. One we have intensive management. Two, is comprehensive study of muskrat populations. And three, is the Upper Yukon Salmon management plan. And these items were discussed at the last meeting and the Council requested that these be on the annual report to be submitted to the Board.

The Council, at their last meeting in Tanana, they got a response from the Federal Subsistence Board on intensive management and the Council did not agree, basically on the response that the Board gave. Basically, the Board said as far as intensive management on conservation use, the Board may not adopt regulations that supersedes an agency's specific regulations nor enlarge or diminish their authority. And the Council requested that -- important statute in law, the Board will have the capacity to implement intensive management on public lands.

If you'd like, we can go on and discuss each item.

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1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, we could there,
2 Donald.

3
4 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, pardon? You want to go
5 ahead and discuss intensive management or go to the next item
6 -- we can go onto the next item and then come back and
7 revisit each item.

8
9 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think Davey might want
10 to say something about the muskrats.

11
12 MR. MIKE: Okay, the comprehensive study of
13 muskrat population, the Council requests a comprehensive
14 study of muskrats on the Yukon Flats be conducted. The
15 Council requested the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge to
16 preserve funding to conduct a pilot study of total muskrat
17 population in the Yukon Flats region. The muskrat population
18 in the Yukon Flats is on decline and is a cause for concern,
19 investigate the declining populations. Subsistence users
20 rely on the muskrats as a subsistence resource and are
21 concerned the muskrat population is decreasing.

22
23 And finally, the last item on the annual
24 report is the Yukon River Salmon Management Plan.

25
26 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Davey -- Donald, we
27 requested this last fall, this muskrat study because a lot of
28 people depend on it. Is there anything followed up by the
29 agencies or anything?

30
31 MR. MIKE: From my understanding, I guess I
32 misunderstood at the last meeting, that the Council requested
33 to pursue funding through the Federal Subsistence Board. If
34 that was not the case, you know, I can go back and do a
35 follow-up.

36
37 MR. JAMES: Donald, Mr. Chairman, maybe I'll
38 relay this question to Craig, you were there at the Yukon
39 Flats Fish and Game Advisory meeting, did they discuss
40 anything about muskrat populations or implementing the plan
41 there?

42
43 MR. FLEENER: That question kind of catches
44 me off guard because I don't remember them saying much about
45 muskrat but I know it's been an issue of interest in the
46 Yukon Flats for, it must be seven or eight years now. And
47 fortunately the muskrat population is actually starting to
48 come back, the numbers are still extremely low but the
49 population is starting to come back a little bit. But we've
50 been asking for some sort of a study to take place for quite

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1 a while now and we haven't heard anything from anybody,
2 nobody's taken a step to find anything out. I guess they
3 were just, like everything, assuming it was in some sort of
4 cycle and would rebound. But we felt the declines were over
5 such a broad area of Alaska and part of Canada and happened
6 so rapidly and happened in a way that hadn't happened in the
7 memory of everyone that we could talk to in the Yukon Flats,
8 that we thought it was worthwhile to look into. And so
9 that's sort of the history of our interest in muskrat. But
10 I don't know, nothing ever came about.

11
12 And I think what I was hoping was that we put
13 this in the annual report, just like we put studying the
14 mortality of moose calves in there and I was sort of hoping
15 that the Refuge would try to come up with some funding to
16 study this like they studied the moose population but I don't
17 know if the Refuge had pursued anything or even was
18 interested at all in this type of an issue. I know I talked
19 to the Refuge people a couple times in the past on it but I
20 don't know if they've ever tried to get funding or put it
21 into any type of an annual request for funding and just
22 haven't gotten it. Have you guys done any of that Ted? It
23 just seems like it would fit just like the calf mortality
24 study, I mean if we have a problem within the Yukon Flats and
25 we're putting a request through OSM, then it would probably
26 end up falling in your lap.

27
28 MR. HEUER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. I
29 wasn't familiar with this specific request. It has been an
30 issue at several of the Yukon Flats Fish and Game Advisory
31 Committee meetings. And Mark did spend some time doing a
32 literature search on muskrat and I believe Paul talked to
33 some of the elders about fluctuations in populations. And,
34 you know, our preliminary evaluation that it's just a natural
35 fluctuation, that these things happen to muskrat populations.

36
37 To respond to your question, we didn't get
38 any specific funding to do a muskrat study. If the Council
39 recommended, you know, that we take an more in-depth look at
40 muskrat and that we seek funding, we would follow up on that,
41 but I'm not sure there's a lot we can do about muskrat
42 populations to be honest. As long as the habitat is healthy
43 and the marshes are healthy, there's not a lot you can do.
44 But we could look at, you know, carcasses and look for
45 diseases and that type of thing.

46
47 MR. FLEENER: Well, it might be a little late
48 for that since they're back on the rebound. But I wonder, in
49 the literature review, what was the discussion in there about
50 cycles or did you only hear that from the elder interviews?

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1 MR. HEUER: I guess it's just typical of
2 muskrat populations to be cyclic like that and I don't
3 remember exactly what Mark said as far as the length of the
4 cycle.

5
6 MR. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chair, Greg McClellan
7 with Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. I also know when
8 Mark was doing the literature search that impacts of disease
9 also was a cause of impacting in the cycling of muskrat
10 populations was something that -- the specific details I
11 don't remember. But I remember he found information on the
12 disease would impact the populations and also there seemed to
13 be a natural cycle of fluctuation.

14
15 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Greg, how's the condition
16 of the water where the muskrats are? Because I know muskrat
17 needs good, clean water. Is there a lot of beaver located
18 where these few muskrats are? The reason I'm asking is that
19 a few of my elders are telling me why the muskrat population
20 and resident specie population, and that's why some of them
21 moose are sick is there are too many beavers in this country
22 and they leave stagnant water and they leave all kinds of
23 beaver fever in the streams.

24
25 And one of our programs in Tanana Tribal
26 Council, what we've been doing is killing them off and then
27 blowing up the beaver dams in certain creeks just to get our
28 whitefish population back. It has been working but we kind
29 of ran out of funds in that department. But why I was asking
30 if is because the muskrats need clean water and the beavers
31 leave all kinds of -- they leave their sickness behind and
32 that's what makes a lot of animals sick and that's what ruins
33 a lot of resident species and I was just wondering if it has
34 an adverse effect on the muskrats, too.

35
36 MR. McCLELLAN: Mr. Chair, I'm not really
37 familiar with the relationship between beaver and muskrat but
38 I know that's also been a comment from folks on the Yukon
39 Flats, that the beaver population has been increasing on the
40 Yukon Flats in different areas for the last several years.
41 The Refuge does try to do a annual beaver lodge survey.
42 There's five areas that we try to do annually although it's
43 dependent on weather and funding and so we haven't been doing
44 it every year, but we've been doing it fairly regularly and
45 those five areas that we've been surveying, the results have
46 -- the total numbers have been pretty stable but in different
47 areas there has been increase and decrease in the specific
48 areas.

49
50 And also another issue, on the Yukon Flats

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1 that has been brought up at this Council meeting and also
2 Fish and Game Advisory Committee meetings and village
3 meetings is the discussion of water quality and quantity on
4 the Yukon Flats and the possible drying up of wetlands and we
5 are looking into that. There is the scientist in Canada, the
6 Old Crow Flats area that's trying to develop a protocol for
7 monitoring wetlands using satellite imagery and so we've --
8 Mark Berterm, again, has had contact with him to see how that
9 is working and if that's something feasible we can try to do
10 on the Flats. But we haven't done anything specifically on
11 the Flats as far as, you know, trying to monitor the water in
12 the wetlands.

13
14 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I'd say that I'd like to
15 see a direction from this Council towards your Refuge, that
16 you do -- you put more into this study of muskrats because to
17 some of our elders in our region it's a delicacy to have
18 this. Even around Tanana, they miss it, the elders. And I
19 go out to look for them every spring and I don't see them.
20 But I would like to see your agency do more to do this, to
21 study this subsistence food that we are being deprived of,
22 maybe for certain reasons but I want to see more -- the next
23 time we come to this table, I want to see more of an
24 explanation of why this is happening.

25
26 MR. HEUER: Mr. Chairman, I just might add
27 that our fisheries resource office in cooperation with CATG
28 has been looking at interactions between beaver and whitefish
29 and they haven't summarized all that data yet but that report
30 should be out fairly soon and basically what they're finding
31 is that areas back behind beaver dams that contain ponds and
32 stuff may be very important to whitefish in their young
33 stages, early stages. So anyway, Craig may have something to
34 add to that, I'm not sure when Randy's going to have that
35 report out. But I was under the impression it would be
36 pretty soon.

37
38 MR. FLEENER: Well, we've got a draft done
39 already so the final product is going to come pretty quickly.

40
41 The beaver/whitefish project actually left us
42 with more questions than it did answers so there's -- we
43 think that in most places, the beaver dams are providing sort
44 of an escape -- a place of escape and a place of feeding for
45 young whitefish but it doesn't do much for big whitefish. If
46 the big whitefish are back there they're going to eat all the
47 little whitefish. So basically it's a place for the little
48 whitefish to hide and go and eat and survive. But when high
49 water comes they get flushed out if the water's high enough.
50 But if the water doesn't get high enough and they don't get

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1 flushed out and they can just get older and die in there
2 actually. And if there's not enough fresh water flowing into
3 a dammed up area, then it actually may be bad but as long as
4 there is enough fresh water flowing into the place and
5 there's a way for the water to get out, then it probably does
6 good and it provides fish for people, they just have to work
7 for it, meaning they have to go break the dams down.

8
9 So it's kind of a mixed -- it can be good and
10 it can be bad. But in most of the cases we think it's a
11 pretty good thing.

12
13 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I guess I just need
14 direction from the Council as far as the muskrat population
15 is concerned, do you still want to go ahead and have our
16 Staff in Anchorage do a follow-up on this matter?

17
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yes.

19
20 MR. MIKE: Okay. Mr. Chair, the last item on
21 the annual report is basically the subsistence Upper Yukon
22 River Salmon Management Plan, basically it mainly addressed
23 subsistence needs that are not being met or are being met as
24 far as the Upper Yukon areas concerns. So at the last
25 meeting, I can't remember if there was a plan already in
26 place or if this would be a new plan. Do you remember,
27 George or Pete?

28
29 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think at the Board of
30 Fish meeting and the last meeting that we had in Anchorage
31 concerning the Upper River and the Lower River on the Yukon,
32 is that, there's going to be restrictions on the Lower Yukon
33 River that allow some to go by pulses and that will allow --
34 to allow the first pulse and stuff to go through and they'll
35 only target the second pulse but I don't know how that's
36 going to be done in the Lower Yukon when the State is not
37 going to be -- when the State is going to pullout of this co-
38 management of managing the fisheries. But I'd sure like to
39 see the Upper River people, especially in the Fort Yukon and
40 Eagle area get some fish this year, even if there is no fish.
41 But there's going to be a lot of restrictions put on the
42 Lower River and in other areas, like Area M and other places,
43 so that we could meet our needs. Because one of our first
44 things here is that we have to protect the people that we
45 represent, their subsistence needs, that they be met and
46 that's one thing that I don't like to see, the State pulling
47 away from this process. But it's just like a kid taking his
48 candy away, that's what it looks like to me, if they can't
49 play.....

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1 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I guess, basically at
2 the last meeting the Council requested that the Fish and
3 Wildlife Service or other agencies help develop an Upper
4 Yukon River Salmon Management Plan and I guess basically we
5 just need to see where do we need to get started from there,
6 if that's the wishes of the Council.

7
8 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chair.

9
10 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Davey.

11
12 MR. JAMES: I guess this is -- one of the
13 main reasons this came out was a majority of the people
14 between the Fish and Wildlife Advisory meeting in the past
15 few years and the CATG natural resource meetings we've been
16 having, a couple of discussions came out, is that, you know,
17 we have never been meeting our needs there and one of the
18 people last year was catching about 500 - about 300 fish and
19 the next day he had to shut it down. And I'd like to, at
20 this time, to thank the people in the Yukon Flats for abiding
21 to the regulations. They shut their fish wheels, pull their
22 fish nets out there and they did a really good -- they were
23 really disappointed but they abide by the regulations that
24 was set forth and it really hurt quite a few people.

25
26 One of the discussions that came up was the
27 sonar at the Rampart, what's it counting? They were
28 wondering if it was counting all the fish that was going by,
29 a majority of it? And Gary Lawrence brought up this idea, he
30 said, why don't we find another system to where we can no for
31 sure the people are meeting their needs and one of the ideas
32 that he brought up was the community quota systems and that
33 was a really good idea during the natural resource meeting we
34 had last year, there was a lot of fish going by and the
35 people were thinking maybe the sonar -- or the tagging --
36 fish tagging -- fish wheel at Rampart wasn't really doing a
37 hundred percent job that it was supposed to be doing. So
38 since we catch a very small amount of the fish for
39 subsistence use there, a community quota was kind of an idea
40 that these people kind of liked there, and that's the idea
41 that we want to put this into the Yukon River Salmon
42 Management Plan; Craig can you work on this?

43
44 I guess the other funding opportunity was
45 maybe we could try to get in touch with the Yukon River
46 Drainage Association. I think they have some proposals --
47 they have some fundings from the Fish and Wildlife Service,
48 that they're willing to work with the organizations and
49 tribes.

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1 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I know that we've
2 been talking a lot about an Upper Yukon River Salmon
3 Management Plan just because of exactly what's been said
4 here, the subsistence needs for several years in a row
5 haven't been met, they haven't even been scratched really.
6 And we sit on these YRDA teleconferences and we have people
7 that are fishing at the mouth of the river telling us that we
8 don't know how to fish, since we can't find the fish we don't
9 know how to fish. And so the present management strategy has
10 really got us pitted against each other. And you know,
11 Gerald said that he thinks that there's going to be
12 sufficient restrictions on fishing at the mouth this year but
13 I thought I heard something about there being two 36-hour
14 fishing periods on the first pulse but I might be wrong
15 because I haven't been following it that closely. But, you
16 know, if there's any opening on the first pulse, that's
17 pretty much going to eliminate or maybe not eliminate, but
18 severely restrict the amount of fish we get because according
19 to what I've heard lately is that the fish we get are from
20 the first pulse and those are the ones that are going into
21 Canada to spawn. And so the more fishing that goes on in the
22 early stages of the returns, the less we'll have on the
23 spawning grounds which is supposed to be our first priority
24 and the less we'll have for subsistence, which is our second
25 priority. But it looks like I've got someone that wants to
26 correct me on a few things.

27
28 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Tom Kron, Office of
29 Subsistence Management. Craig, I am not here to correct you
30 at all. I think you've got it exactly right. What the Board
31 of Fish adopted was a schedule for the Yukon River as well as
32 the coastal areas. And for the Lower Yukon River, the
33 schedule is two 36-hour periods per week. And the way it was
34 described was that the -- the feeling was that it in a normal
35 kind of year this would allow people enough opportunity to
36 get their needs. But again, I think everyone's recognizing
37 that the run may, in fact, be worse than -- potentially worse
38 than last year coming in so we're not looking at a normal
39 kind of return and I think that, you know, this issue -- I
40 think the plan was to discuss it in more detail tomorrow. We
41 don't have a lot of the fisheries people here today. I know
42 Monty Millard is planing to come over tomorrow and is
43 prepared to give a presentation and I think Fish and Game
44 will be here as well. So I think parts of this discussion,
45 possibly, would be best deferred until tomorrow.

46
47 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

48
49 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, I guess we can save more
50 of this discussion for tomorrow but I certainly think we need

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1 to keep this in our annual report and I think we really have
2 to demand -- you know, I don't know what a demand will do for
3 us but I think we really need to demand an Upper Yukon River
4 Salmon Management Plan, because, as has been pointed out,
5 we're primarily subsistence users, I think we have a very
6 small group of commercial fishermen that take very few fish
7 and we need a plan that's going to meet subsistence needs and
8 that means that somebody else is going to have to tighten
9 their belt, I think. And when we have people at the mouth of
10 the river that meet 100 percent of their subsistence needs
11 almost every year and they meet a large percentage of their
12 commercial needs, or even half of their commercial needs,
13 they have commercial opportunity, we don't even have
14 subsistence opportunity.

15
16 And if escapement is our number 1 goal, we
17 have got to start meeting escapement, and if subsistence is
18 our second priority we've got to start meeting subsistence,
19 and if commercial's our third priority, that means we need to
20 shut commercial down in order to meet those subsistence needs
21 and to meet our escapement needs and I'm not going to sit
22 ideally by on a YRFDA teleconference anymore while somebody
23 tells me go ask your elder where the fish are because you
24 just don't know how to fish. The fact is there just weren't
25 that many fish in the river. And so we have to put together
26 a plan that meets the subsistence needs in the Upper Yukon
27 and we can't just keep bowing to the demands of commercial
28 fishermen. You know, something else has to be done, we've
29 got to get our priorities straight. Or else let's change our
30 priorities around and put subsistence on the bottom where
31 it's really been managed for the last, I don't know how many
32 years, and let's put escapement second, which is where it's
33 been managed for a long time.

34
35 Thanks.

36
37 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chairman, that was the last
38 item for the annual report. And do you have -- oh, sorry.

39
40 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Fleener, I guess
41 a general comment, we'll get more into it tomorrow. But I
42 think the expectation is that there will not be a commercial
43 fishery next summer for one. And I think there was -- there
44 was a lot of discussion at the Board of Fisheries meeting and
45 I know a number of Regional Council members were able to come
46 in for that but there was a lot of discussion about the need
47 to distribute the allowable assistance harvest throughout the
48 river so the people up river don't get shorted, for example.
49 Again, there's a possibility, I think, next summer there
50 won't be enough subsistence fish for everybody to meet their

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1 needs, then the challenge is, how do you distribute them so
2 that everybody gets a reasonable percentage? Everybody's got
3 a reasonable opportunity.

4
5 And I think, again, Monty intends to talk
6 with us tomorrow about that, how to come up with a plan to
7 accomplish that and I think definitely wants to get input
8 from both the Western and Eastern Interior Regional Councils
9 on their perspective as how to do that. The YK Regional
10 Council meeting is next week so there'll be an opportunity to
11 discuss it with them. But, again, the intent was to get a
12 lot of input and perspective as to how exactly to go about it
13 this year so we can have a fair approach. Again, provide for
14 escapement first, but then to give everybody a fair shot at
15 getting their subsistence needs.

16
17 Thank you.

18
19 MR. JAMES: Since we're talking about this
20 salmon management plan there, I'd like to bring up one more
21 item. I think since our counterpartners are here, it would
22 be a good time to discuss it and try to generate some support
23 or not before bringing it up tomorrow, is that, the
24 subsistence people are really getting hurt by not having a
25 Yukon River and Canadian's negotiations treaty signed. And
26 by not having that treaty signed, our subsistence people are
27 being hurt, really. And I think we need to send a letter to
28 the state of Alaska, Mary Peat, and to our negotiator, to
29 proceed with this treaty negotiation there. Because the last
30 three years, I know our people really got affected by this.
31 I mean they shut our people down in the Yukon Flats and then
32 the fish passed the sonar up at the border was reported that
33 it was above the level and so since the Canadians -- one of
34 the things I heard in Tanana at the Yukon River Drainage
35 Association meeting before our meeting was that, since they
36 didn't have no treaty with Alaska, they went ahead and opened
37 up their commercial season and here they shut our subsistence
38 people down. So we really need to get this treaty moving
39 forward. It's being stalemated there.

40
41 So if it's okay with the Council, if we can
42 just send a letter to the appropriate people to proceed with
43 this.

44
45 Thank you.

46
47 MR. KRON: Mr. Chairman, Mr. James, it's my
48 understanding that there's plans to have a US/Canada
49 negotiation session, the next one in Whitehorse the week
50 after next and, again, that's coming up very close and Davey

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1 is one of the delegates to that process and he hasn't heard
2 anything about the meeting, I haven't heard anything about
3 the meeting. It was discussed -- the negotiator from
4 Washington D.C., State Department was at the Yukon River
5 Drainage Association meeting in Holy Cross and gave a
6 presentation there. There was discussion about how to
7 prepare for the discussions with the Canadians but, again,
8 I'm not sure if that meeting is going to happen or not.

9
10 You know, I guess I agree with Davey that
11 this is really important about, you know, we think that on
12 average about half of the king salmon that are caught by
13 fishermen in Alaska are actually produced from streams in
14 Canada, so those spawning grounds are really important to
15 Alaskans. About a quarter to a third of the chum salmon that
16 are taken in Alaska by Alaskan fishermen are produced from
17 streams in Canada. So it's real important that the two
18 governments work together. The last negotiations were held
19 here in Fairbanks last spring, in April, and there was a fair
20 amount of progress made but there are still some hangups on
21 the hardest parts and the hardest parts of the negotiations
22 are basically the catch-sharing. How you share the catch.
23 A lot of the other parts around the edges have been worked
24 out but this is the hardest part that's left. I know that
25 the Canadians want to wrap things up as well.

26
27 We've been falling short on chinook salmon
28 escapement in Canada the past three years.....

29
30 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Tom, I think we'll
31 hear about it tomorrow.

32
33 MR. KRON: Thank you.

34
35 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, that was the last item
36 on the annual report unless we have any other comments to be
37 included in the report.

38
39 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I have a comment,
40 what date is this supposed to be submitted to the Subsistence
41 Board?

42
43 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we can put that date
44 either today or from the last meeting.

45
46 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, if it's going to be
47 submitted really soon, I think it would be good for us to add
48 another sentence in here about the fact that the State has
49 pulled out, you know, of working with us and I don't know
50 exactly how to word it but the -- the dismay that I'm feeling

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1 towards that happening.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: It was one of the first
4 things that when I first got on this Board and I figured --
5 the first things that I seen was that the State and the
6 Federal government would have to work together. I've been on
7 this Board for four years or whatever but I always have been
8 pushing for co-management and to see the State break off now,
9 it's only going to hurt us. And me and Craig, we've been
10 pushing for this for a long time. About every meeting we say
11 something about it and I'd like to say we're very
12 disappointed with them.

13

14 MR. FLEENER: Something else, too, Mr. Chair,
15 I want to add to that is that, you know, I don't know how
16 we're going to get through the summer, if they pull out and
17 stay out of working with all of the Federal agencies on this
18 co-management thing, how are we going to manage fish? How
19 are we going to do this in-season management? You know, it's
20 going to be pretty hard if they're not going to be willing to
21 come to meetings or sit at the table, anything that cost them
22 a penny or more, they're not going to be willing to
23 participate in. And so as far as the memo goes, if it cost
24 them money they're not going to do it. And so, to me, that's
25 going to make managing fish a whole lot more problematic.

26

27 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I'll go ahead and start
28 writing up the concerns that the Council has about the State
29 not participating in the annual report and I'll work with
30 Craig on that.

31

32 MR. FLEENER: And Mr. Chair, if Donald could
33 just -- he could work with me on putting that in there but if
34 he cold just run that by you and not the whole Council and
35 get that sent out as soon as possible, I think that would be
36 good advice.

37

38 MR. MIKE: Agreed. Mr. Chair, that concludes
39 the annual report section. The next thing on our agenda,
40 agency reports and if there is agencies.....

41

42 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Donald, I was just
43 going to ask the members that I have here, do you guys want
44 to add anything to this annual report?

45

46 (Pause)

47

48 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Along with sending this
49 letter, I'd like to have a different letter, not along with
50 this but I'd like to have a letter coming from this Council

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1 going to Frank Rue stating our disappointment in his pulling
2 out, I mean him telling his agencies not to work along with
3 us because of funding situations.

4
5 MR. MILLER: Mr. Chair, we might also look at
6 CC'ing a copy of that to the Governor considering he is
7 pushing for all this co-management of tribes. And then to
8 have Superintendent Monroe, you know, go against it, it just
9 doesn't sit right with me.

10
11 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I understand that the
12 Council's disappointment for the lack of the State's
13 participation on the Council would be included in the annual
14 report as well as sending a separate letter to Frank Rue.

15
16 MR. FLEENER: Yes.

17
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yes.

19
20 MR. MIKE: Okay.

21
22 MR. FLEENER: I can work with Donald on that
23 as well, I got some good words I want to put in there.

24
25 MR. FLEENER: Okay, Mr. Chair, if that
26 concludes the annual report section we can move onto the next
27 item on the agenda and what we have next is agency reports.

28
29 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Donald, I'd like to
30 take a five minute break before we go into agency reports.
31 And it looks like the Office of Subsistence Management is the
32 first one up.

33
34 MR. MIKE: Yes, that's true. Unless we can
35 -- the Office of Subsistence Management will have some more
36 reports for tomorrow's meeting, too, during the joint meeting
37 so maybe we can hold off.

38
39 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: You're saying that they
40 want to do their report tomorrow?

41
42 MR. MIKE: That's what's on the agenda for
43 the joint meeting tomorrow.

44
45 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay, take a break.

46
47 (Off record)

48
49 (On record)

50

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1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I'll call the meeting
2 back to order.

3
4 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we're at the item of
5 agency reports and you can call on the Refuges or any other
6 agencies.

7
8 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, we'll just go right
9 down the list. The Office of Subsistence Management is going
10 to give their report tomorrow in a joint session so we'll go
11 down to Native corporations and regional or village or tribal
12 councils. Is there anybody from regional village
13 corporations or tribal councils that would like to say
14 something?

15
16 (Pause)

17
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Then we'll go to Council
19 of Athabaskan Tribal Governments. Do you want to say
20 something there?

21
22 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, Mr. Chair. I guess since
23 I'm the only representative here from CATG, that -- I guess
24 wasn't quite prepared for this but I can give a report on the
25 Natural Resource Department, anyways, as far as CATG. We're
26 working on a variety of different research projects, most of
27 them in cooperation with one or another State or Federal
28 agency. As was pointed out earlier, we're doing a couple of
29 beaver/whitefish projects and we're working on several other
30 projects.

31
32 Of course, CATG is supporting me in my
33 master's degree project, which is looking at the vegetation
34 in the Yukon Flats to determine whether or not it's okay
35 moose food and at nights I'm actually over here doing some
36 analysis. So as soon as I leave here, I go stand up in the
37 Fish and Game lab for four or five hours, you know, taking a
38 look at the samples I've collected and I've been doing that
39 each night while I've been here. And I've got some elder
40 interviews to conduct yet, and the reason I'm conducting
41 those interviews is to find out how they used to manage the
42 moose population and how they think we should manage the
43 moose population. I'm also going to look at success rates in
44 the old days and compare that to success rates nowadays and
45 basically just get an idea of what our elders think we should
46 do with our moose population. That's one component of the
47 study. Another component, of course, is looking at
48 vegetation. And a third component is where I'll be modeling
49 the moose population different types of changes, different
50 types of management strategies and those strategies might

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1 include increasing moose numbers by harvesting more predators
2 or it may incorporate some sort of habitat changes.

3
4 By the looks of my research so far, I don't
5 think we need to do much to habitat but it's probably always
6 wise to include some sort of habitat work if you're going to
7 do any sort of wildlife manipulation just because it -- even
8 if you don't need it it makes people feel good so we'll
9 probably end up incorporating that just because people don't
10 want you to do anything to wildlife if you're not doing
11 something to habitat first. And of course, there's always
12 the human end of things, managing the way people hunt.

13
14 So that's part of my thesis and I've got a
15 lot of the data collected and I've been fortunate enough to
16 work with CATG on this which has been a good supporter.

17
18 Other projects we're working on with CATG, of
19 course, we're always interested in environmental things that
20 are going on around us. We've got a lot of small pollution
21 problems and we've got some major pollution problems that
22 we're concerned about and so we're trying to take a look at
23 some of those pollution problems and how they're affecting
24 our people. And one of the things we'd like to start getting
25 into here really soon is looking at the influence of
26 different types of pollution on wildlife and other wild foods
27 and see how those, in turn, affect the people up there.
28 Because there's people, you know, that are getting sick from
29 all kinds of weird things that people never used to get sick
30 from, at least, that's what I've been told. And you know,
31 it's got to be coming from some new source so we're going to
32 try to take a look at pollutants that are going into our wild
33 food supply and seeing how they're affecting people and then
34 trying to look for some sort of changes, how we can help
35 people out by getting rid of some of these sources of
36 pollution.

37
38 We're always interested in any type of
39 wildlife things that are going on. We work with Fish and
40 Wildlife and Fish and Game on doing moose surveys, I think
41 we're about to embark on wolf survey here pretty soon. We
42 work on a lot of different projects but CATG's concern is
43 with regional issues and we support the villages in the Yukon
44 Flats, that's our goal anyways. If a community has an issue,
45 we're there to support them in taking care of whatever their
46 problem is. If it's finding funds or whatever. But as far
47 as fish and game, we're, of course, very concerned that
48 subsistence needs are met and we want to make sure that
49 subsistence needs are met and so one of the ways we do that
50 is by getting involved in management and we want to be as

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1 involved as we can in every facet of management and this is
2 why we try to do cooperative agreements with Fish and Game
3 and Fish and Wildlife Service and why we're interested in
4 being involved in assuming a lot of management authority in
5 the Yukon Flats area. And since we want to make sure that
6 there's ample subsistence opportunity, a lot of times that
7 means we have to get involved in research and so we're doing
8 more and more research and hoping to continue to do more
9 research and it's a lot easier for us to conduct research in
10 the Yukon Flats than it is to bring some student from the
11 University of Idaho up and let them work on a master's degree
12 there, plus those don't happen often enough and there's a lot
13 of things that need to be studied so we're working on
14 building capacity and working with the tribes as much as we
15 can. And if there's any way CATG can support this Council,
16 you know, we're always available.

17
18 And unless there's any questions I'll close
19 with that.

20
21 MR. JAMES: Craig, I have a question here.
22 Maybe if you can tell the Chiefs that I mentioned this fact
23 there that they can write a letter to support the subsistence
24 people to the Canada and Alaska negotiations, to proceed,
25 because it's really affecting the subsistence people in the
26 Yukon Flats.

27
28 MR. FLEENER: Yes, I'll certainly relay that
29 at the next CATG meeting, which is in two weeks and I think
30 it's going to be in this building here so I'll be at that
31 meeting and I can -- if there is other people here that would
32 like to give some sort of report to CATG or to participate,
33 I can't invite you because I'm not on the board but I'm
34 certain if you ask the board, that they'd certainly allow you
35 to participate in the meeting.

36
37 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, it looks like we can go
38 on with the list. Tanana Chiefs, if there's a representative
39 here to give a report or we can just move on down the list.

40
41 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I think the concern in
42 Tanana Chiefs is that Steve Ginnis, kind of yesterday
43 requested funding but considering that we already did go
44 through our resource monitoring plans already these past few
45 months it will have to come up in the next round for Steve.
46 So I'll personally tell him that. I thought Stanley Ned was
47 going to be here and say something but he's got other things
48 to do, I guess, so we could just move on.

49
50 MR. MIKE: Okay, Mr. Chair, it looks like if

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1 there's any local villages or tribal councils out there.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Here comes Stanley. You
4 want to say something, Stanley -- yeah, Tanana Chiefs.

5

6 MR. FLEENER: Don't forget your notebook.

7

8 MR. NED: My name is Stanley Ned. I work for
9 Tanana Chiefs as a staff researcher for wildlife and parks.
10 I guess you all know Gabe Sam was working as the program
11 director has now been released and I've now taken on some of
12 the things that he was working on.

13

14 And basically what we're doing is we have a
15 cooperative agreement with Alaska Department of Fish and Game
16 to do non-salmon species studies on the Koyukuk River. We're
17 also working on -- Gabe Sam was sitting on the migratory
18 birds and so I don't really know what was going to happen
19 with that but I attended the last meeting and we're waiting
20 for a response back from the villages to see what's going to
21 happen with that.

22

23 But other than that, I'm just going to take
24 it day by day.

25

26 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Stanley, is there any way
27 that you could work in conjunction with like CATG or any
28 organization up there concerning the muskrat populations up
29 there because you know a lot of people from like Stevens
30 Village, Arctic, Beaver and Fort Yukon kind of miss eating
31 muskrat and I was just wondering if TCC could work along with
32 them or something like that.

33

34 MR. NED: If we receive some kind of
35 direction from some of the villages to point us in that
36 direction it would give us a directive to it, yes.

37

38 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

39

40 MR. JAMES: Stan -- Mr. Chairman, as I
41 referred to Craig and also a letter, to the Board of
42 Fisheries, can you -- underneath your capacity refer this
43 back to the Board of Directors for TCC is that is to send a
44 letter stating that we need to get these negotiations ongoing
45 -- up and going there with Canada and U.S., it's been
46 stalling for 15 years now and it's really affecting the
47 subsistence people along the Yukon River. I really believe
48 that once we get this treaty signed with Canada, that will
49 lift some of the burden up on the subsistence people there.
50 And what I want is to generate some support there to the

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1 State agencies there to get this negotiations going there,
2 back on the table.

3
4 Thank you.

5
6 MR. NED: As far as I know the State and the
7 Feds are still negotiating with the Canadians. And as far as
8 the State pulling out from fisheries, I don't know how --
9 what kind of impact it's going to have on the negotiation
10 development, I will find out.

11
12 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

13
14 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you Stan. Is there
15 anybody here from local village tribal council that would
16 like to say something?

17
18 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chairman, this -- I don't
19 know if Craig knows about this but I'd like to bring up that
20 the Native Village of Fort Yukon and the City Council of Fort
21 Yukon, two months ago passed a resolution opposing the
22 fishery closures last fall, mainly because subsistence people
23 never met their needs. And I don't know, Craig, if you've
24 seen that resolution or not -- you did there -- and that's
25 just for the record to let you guys know that.

26
27 They also passed another resolution that the
28 negotiations between Alaska and Canada be put back on the
29 table there because last fall, you know, the Canadians opened
30 up their commercial fishing and we got shut down again. So
31 it's really affecting the subsistence people there. So we
32 really need to -- I just want to let you know on that from
33 the Native Village of Fort Yukon.

34
35 Thank you.

36
37 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the next item on the
38 list is State of Alaska, Subsistence Division of Wildlife,
39 Conservation Division, Commercial Fisheries and Sportfish
40 Division; if there are any State people out there that would
41 like to make a report otherwise we can go onto BLM.

42
43 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: We have one State here.

44
45 MR. FLEENER: Just one.

46
47 MR. BURR: I'm John Burr with Sportfish
48 Division with Alaska Fish and Game. I was going to offer a
49 short report on the Dall River, northern pike fishery.

50

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1 As you are all aware we've been involved in
2 a planning process for that fishery, trying to put together
3 a fisheries management plan. The goal was to cooperatively
4 develop a plan with Stevens Village and Fish and Game and the
5 Refuge and the advisory committees, and up to this point it's
6 worked out pretty well. We've had good participation from
7 all the different groups. As a result of the data needs that
8 were identified during that planning process, we launched a
9 project at the Dall River that we've reported on before. The
10 Dall River portion of that project is pretty much going to be
11 wrapped up this summer. The notion was, do these fish stay
12 in the Dall River area so that if we establish special
13 regulations for the Dall River would they be effective, and
14 then the other part of it was to establish what the age and
15 size composition looked like for that population.

16
17 As a result of of this study and from the
18 process we've put in some proposals to modify the regulations
19 for the sportfishery in the Dall River and the Board of Fish
20 adopted those changes so we have a much more restrictive set
21 of regulations for the Dall River sport fishery including a
22 no-bait restriction, no more set lines are allowed in the
23 area and primarily a catch and release fishery for large
24 fish. We had real good support and cooperation with Stevens
25 Village. They've been very involved in the field portions of
26 the project and in this planning process.

27
28 Anyway, we have been funded through the
29 Federal Subsistence Board, with Stevens Village to continue
30 work on northern pike in the Yukon Flats area and we will get
31 that one started in May or June in the next drainage upstream
32 from Stevens Village and the goal here is to look at how fish
33 that are spawning in this upper portion are affecting or
34 contributing or not contributing to these fish that are
35 targeted by sport fishermen and by subsistence fishermen in
36 the area.

37
38 And that's all I was going to report on at
39 this time. It's my understanding that the agenda identifies
40 tomorrow morning as the time to talk about a lot of the other
41 fisheries issues in the Yukon drainage, both in the Eastern
42 and Western Interior. I anticipate being back at that time
43 and I also expect that we'll have some more fisheries staff
44 here tomorrow morning.

45
46 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chairman, a question there.
47 John, gee, I've been thinking about you for about a week now.

48
49 (Laughter)

50

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1 MR. JAMES: And the reason I've been thinking
2 about you is the catch and release methods, does it really
3 help the populations of the fish there by catching and
4 releasing it? Does the fish actually survive? Are there any
5 studies done? Because the issue came about, the hooks really
6 gets into the gills of the fish there and once you release
7 them and you catch them again and you release them, are there
8 any studies done, what's the percentage that survive after
9 catching them and releasing them?

10
11 MR. BURR: Yeah, Davey. There actually have
12 been quite a few studies, particularly with northern pike.
13 And what almost all the studies find is that the catch and
14 release mortality rate, if you catch a fish the chances of it
15 living are -- or actually dying is about -- in all of the
16 studies that they've done, it's always been less than 10
17 percent and in many instances where there's been an attempt
18 to treat the fish really well, it's less than five percent,
19 usually three or four percent. Without question, if the fish
20 gets hooked deep down in its stomach or if it gets hooked in
21 the eye or in the gills where the gills are bleeding, those
22 fish, by and large, don't survive. So a really important
23 part of catch and release fishing is proper gear type and
24 then good handling techniques. But of all the different
25 kinds of fish in the state of Alaska, pike are probably more
26 able to put up with catch and release fishing than anything
27 else. You don't have to quite cut their heads off and hide
28 it to kill them but they're pretty tough.

29
30 So, yes, it's been demonstrated in a number
31 of cases that a catch and release regulation for a northern
32 pike sportfishery is an effective way to maintain the large
33 older age fish in the population. So, yeah, we're pretty
34 confident in the case of northern pike that it's a good
35 effective way to help conserve the stock.

36
37 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I got a follow-up
38 question. You said that if proper gear type is used and
39 proper fishing techniques then about less than 10 percent
40 will die. How many people are using proper gear types and
41 does proper gear types including cutting barbs off?

42
43 MR. BURR: In this particular fishery, I
44 think most people are using proper gear types, particularly
45 now that we've put the no-bait restriction on, that reduces
46 that probability that the fish are going to swallow the gear
47 really deep. As far as barbs or not barbs, a lot of people
48 prefer not to use barbs but every time they've tried to do an
49 experience to demonstrate whether barbs were either better or
50 worse, there's been no difference in any of the results that

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1 I'm aware of. So although it makes it a lot easier to let
2 the fish go, and I prefer to fish that way myself, there's no
3 scientific information that demonstrates that it's necessary.

4
5 MR. FLEENER: Thanks.

6
7 MR. JAMES: John, is this true with grayling?

8
9 MR. BURR: Yeah, actually grayling put up
10 with catch and release fishing pretty well also. The
11 mortality statistic is a little bit higher for grayling by
12 and large than it is for pike. But grayling put up with it
13 pretty well. Probably the fish species that likes it the
14 least may be sheefish, you have to be more careful with
15 sheefish than with some of the other species of fish. But
16 again, with proper handling techniques and a well educated
17 fisherman, catch and release fishing is a pretty effective
18 way to maintain a portion of the stock if there's going to be
19 this kind of activity.

20
21 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: All right, thank you,
22 John. It looks like this next subject that's up is BLM, and
23 since we're going to be meeting with Western tomorrow and it
24 seems like if we want to hear it twice -- I'll leave it up to
25 my Board here, you just want to hear it tomorrow?

26
27 MR. FLEENER: What's that, BLM?

28
29 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah.

30
31 MR. FLEENER: Why would they speak again
32 tomorrow?

33
34 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Because it's here, it's
35 on this agenda and it's on the agenda for Western and Eastern
36 Interior.

37
38 MR. JAMES: Mr. Chairman, I think the last
39 three times we've been getting her up here and we've been
40 postponing her and I think since she's here we might as well
41 listen to her.

42
43 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay.

44
45 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

46
47 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Go ahead, Ruth.

48
49 MS. GRONQUIST: Thank you, Mr. Chair, members
50 of the Council. Well, I don't have much to say and I will be

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1 here tomorrow but also another biologist will be here who
2 will speak to different issues and probably most of what I
3 have to tell you is just for the Eastern Interior. Most of
4 the things that we're concerned about, you've already
5 addressed yesterday. So basically I'm just here if you have
6 any questions today.

7

8 Thank you.

9

10 MR. FLEENER: Nice hearing from you.

11

12 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the next item on the
13 agenda is Fish and Wildlife Service and OSM is on the list
14 again, so that will be discussion for tomorrow. But if
15 there's any Refuges out there that'd like to make a
16 presentation to the Council they can do so.

17

18 MR. McCLELLAN: Yes, Mr. Chair, my name is
19 Greg McClellan, subsistence coordinator for Yukon Flats and
20 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. And I have a report that's
21 fairly specific to Eastern Interior issues on both Refuges
22 and I also have here Paul Williams, Refuge information
23 technician for Yukon Flats. I guess we can start with Yukon
24 Flats. Yesterday morning I handed out a hardcopy of the
25 report to everybody and if they still have them or if it's
26 been misplaced I have extra copies. I just put it under the
27 meeting booklet in your place yesterday. I'll just kind of
28 summarize a few quick things on that report.

29

30 As far as the moose population, the Refuge
31 did complete a moose population survey 25(D) west last fall.
32 The density estimate from that survey was .36 moose per
33 square mile and in the material I handed out there was a
34 figure that shows for the density estimate from '92, '96, '99
35 and surveys in 2000 that show it's varied between .3 and .44
36 moose per square mile. So still a very low moose population.

37

38 And as Craig mentioned in his report, we've
39 been working cooperatively with CATG and last fall the Refuge
40 transferred \$5,000 to CATG to help with costs for conducting
41 a moose population survey of 25(D) east. And as Craig also
42 mentioned in his master's project, the Refuge is also trying
43 to look at collecting information on moose habitat and
44 currently the two biologist from the Refuge are out on the
45 Refuge collecting willow twigs between Stevens Village and
46 Beaver, also working with folks from ADF&G and U.S. Forest
47 Service on that.

48

49 And the last thing is the Staff from our
50 ecological services office had put in a proposal to look at

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1 contaminants in salmon in the Yukon and Kuskokwim River and
2 that project got funded. It's going to be a one year project
3 and they'll be collecting 20 chinook and 20 chum from Bethel,
4 Tanana and Beaver and analyzing them for an extensive list of
5 contaminants. On the report I listed the two biologists that
6 will be doing the study and either themselves or the Refuge
7 at the fall meeting will be able to give the preliminary
8 results from that.

9
10 So I'll open it up for any questions on any
11 of that material.

12
13 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Craig, why was it just
14 requested for one year for this contaminant study on the
15 Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

16
17 MR. McCLELLAN: I'm not sure why when the
18 proposal was put in it was just put in for one year, but I
19 could find out. I don't know right now but I could find out
20 and report to you later.

21
22 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: From the past history of
23 seeing studies being done and stuff, is that, one year of
24 gathering information on any subjects for species that we
25 deal with, it's better to be -- instead of one year I'd like
26 to see studies being done for two or three years so we could
27 get some kind of information, decrease or increase or does it
28 stay the same; that's what I'd like to see.

29
30 MR. McCLELLAN: That's a very good point.

31
32 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I have a question
33 for Greg. The black bear study you guys have done, have you
34 been able to or will you be able to, from the information
35 you've got, come up with a population estimate for 25(D)
36 east? I think that's where the study was in, right,
37 primarily the east?

38
39 MR. McCLELLAN: It's in the area near Birch
40 Creek and the purpose of the study is more to determine home
41 range areas and information on reproduction. It was not
42 really designed to collect population estimates, so I don't
43 believe that that can be developed from the study.

44
45 MR. FLEENER: And you guys haven't been bold
46 enough to even make a guess at what the black bear population
47 would be like from -- because you guys did -- you guys had
48 your foot snares out for -- what was it, about 20 days or
49 something like that and you had -- did you have recaptures of
50 the same bears? And if you did, I think you should be able

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1 to come up with some sort of a population estimate, at least
2 for that area, if you had recaptures of the same bears. And,
3 of course, if you caught new bears, but I could be wrong.

4
5 MR. McCLELLAN: Yeah, Craig. Yeah,
6 definitely -- there were recaptures and if I'm remembering
7 correctly, it was within a one or two square mile area, they
8 did catch 22 different bears. I'll check with Mark if
9 there's any way to get a population estimate for just that
10 specific area or if it could be expanded. But like I said,
11 I'm not aware that -- I know Mark hasn't developed any
12 information like that as of yet.

13
14 MR. FLEENER: And another question, I know
15 that Fish and Wildlife Service has said that they've been
16 sort of carrying an ongoing -- I don't know what steps you
17 guys are at or what you've taken, but an ongoing look at
18 bison reintroduction, I was wondering if you had any sort of
19 an update, we haven't had an update from you guys in quite a
20 while. What you've learned, what's been talked about. But
21 I know that in talking with George and Ted that you guys have
22 had an ongoing, although, maybe not in-depth, an ongoing look
23 at the bison reintroduction.

24
25 Grab a chair behind you, Ted. And this will
26 be a plaguing issue so you might as well include it in your
27 reports for us at least once a year.

28
29 MR. HEUER: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We have a
30 committee set up to look at the potential -- we have a
31 committee set up and it's meeting periodically to review new
32 information. We recently got Bob's final copy of the report
33 that they published. That was disseminated to all members
34 and we haven't had a meeting since that time.

35
36 We'd seen the report in draft and, you know,
37 I haven't really seen anything in the report that is going to
38 change the Fish and Wildlife Service's position on the
39 introduction. Basically, you know, we have a mandate to
40 conserve fish and wildlife species and populations and
41 habitats in their natural diversity. And when you do that on
42 an area the size of the Yukon Flats or any of the Refuges in
43 Alaska, you're basically trying to maintain natural processes
44 and natural functions like the natural role of fire in the
45 environment or natural water levels. And we recognize that
46 ecosystems changes and evolve over time and I think some of
47 the work that you've done, Craig, would, you know, indicate
48 that the elders are saying that things have changed quite a
49 bit just in their lifetimes. Nobody really knows why bison
50 disappeared from the Yukon Flats. You know, if you go back

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1 far enough we used to have elk, we had horses, we had sheep,
2 we had rhinoceroses, lions and a lot of different species.

3
4 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, but most of those species
5 really don't exist on the planet anymore. We don't have a
6 choice of reintroducing those. We don't have a choice of
7 bringing them back from the endangered species list. We
8 don't have a choice of bringing back the short-faced bear or
9 any of these other animals. But if there were 50 of them
10 that were living somewhere and we had the opportunity to try
11 to get this animal off the endangered species list, if we had
12 the choice to get this animal off the threatened list, of
13 course, you know as well as I do it's not listed in the
14 States here but it's listed in Canada, and this is range
15 where the animals used to live and according to our elders
16 they were here, you know, maybe a hundred years ago or so.
17 And so, you know, I think that to use rhinoceros and those
18 sorts of things as an examples of other animals, we can't
19 help those animals, you know, they no longer exist. But the
20 wood bison does exist and it existed here in fairly large
21 numbers. It existed here not too long ago. And to not help
22 it, I think would be is -- it's not natural.

23
24 But go ahead. I didn't mean to cut you off
25 but I wanted to make sure that we don't classify a wood bison
26 the same way we would classify the North American lion.

27
28 MR. HEUER: Sure. I was just making a point
29 there that ecosystems do change and nobody really knows why
30 bison disappeared from the Yukon Flats. And our policy is
31 that if a species disappears because of natural environmental
32 change then we don't do reintroductions.

33
34 MR. FLEENER: Let me say one more thing here,
35 Ted, that I don't -- I hate the idea that we keep saying that
36 nobody has an idea when they disappeared, we have really good
37 ideas. We have carbon dates of when -- at least when the
38 most recent ones were in Alaska and in the Yukon Flats, so we
39 have a general idea with those dates. We have oral histories
40 which anthropologists will tell you, they don't hang on in
41 detail for thousands of years, and so we have a really good
42 idea that bison were here fairly recently. Now, as George
43 may argue and you may argue, we don't know the exact location
44 of this information but we -- I think George said it one time
45 that he talked to some people in some surrounding areas,
46 maybe in Yukon or something like that, in other places in
47 Alaska and there were no stories about bison but there are
48 stories from the Yukon Flats about bison, so you know one of
49 your arguments may be that the information is -- and I know
50 it isn't one of your discussion points because you and I have

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1 discussed it, but that, the information may be from somewhere
2 else but we don't have that same information coming to us
3 from somewhere else. We don't have 10 elders from Old Crow
4 saying there were bison here 200 years ago, we don't have all
5 those sorts of information coming from Dawson or from other
6 places. We have elders in the Yukon Flats and in some other
7 places close to the Yukon Flats saying there were bison on
8 the Yukon Flats not too long ago and we have detailed
9 information, which not being an anthropologist, I can't speak
10 for them but having spoken to several anthropologist, that
11 they say detailed information doesn't last too long. And I
12 don't know what -- if George wants to say anything about that
13 but -- I guess we have several anthropologist out there and
14 I'm certainly not one. But what I've heard is that detailed
15 information doesn't last too long and so I think we could
16 narrow it down to say bison were here not too long ago. And
17 especially if we're looking at radio carbon dates, which are
18 not that old either.

19

20 So go ahead.

21

22 MR. HEUER: Again, you know, one of the big
23 issues for us is why they disappeared, not just when they
24 were here. You know, we're trying to manage the Yukon Flats
25 National Wildlife Refuge for the long-term, you know, what do
26 we want it to look like 50 years from now, 100 years from
27 now, 200 years from now. And we want a place where natural
28 processes have prevailed. You know, when you manage for
29 natural diversity you don't draw a line in the sand as of
30 December 2nd, 1980 when the Refuge was established and say,
31 we're going to keep everything exactly like it is because
32 pretty soon you'd have a pretty unnatural system. So you
33 have to allow for evolution to take place.

34

35 MR. FLEENER: I think actually we have been
36 managing based on drawing a line in the sand. People came to
37 this continent, you know, whenever they came here and they
38 looked at something and they said this is how this country's
39 supposed to look and that's how they managed it. I really
40 don't think people have let the systems take over. We've
41 been actively managing, which means, we've been removing
42 animals, we've been replacing animals, we've been cutting
43 trees, we've been stopping fire, we've been letting fire go,
44 we've been controlling where fire goes, we've been building
45 fire breaks, we've been an active manager in the way our
46 country looks. It probably doesn't look anything like it
47 looked when we first got here but because we've been in
48 control of managing it and if you look take a look at a lot
49 of the national parks around the country, they're in big
50 trouble because they're being managed to try to preserve what

00121

1 people think they're supposed to look like instead of letting
2 them go, you know, and a good example of that is big fires
3 taking off. And I think we've learned a lesson there by
4 having that attitude. And so to say that we're going to try
5 to maintain things in their natural diversity when we are
6 controlling part of that diversity but not other parts of the
7 diversity, I think it's almost impossible to try to have that
8 as a goal.

9
10 If you're going to leave something alone then
11 you leave it alone and you don't control anything. If you're
12 not going to leave it alone then you're not going to leave it
13 alone.

14
15 So I think it's a good concept, managing
16 things in their natural diversity but we're changing -- we're
17 constantly changing things and people, wherever they've
18 existed have always changed things. And people that have
19 lived on the land have changed things on the land for
20 thousands of years to their benefit and to wildlife's
21 benefit. As Paul was mentioning earlier, you know, we've
22 been active participants in managing the landscape and we
23 learn from trial and error. And so people have manipulated
24 habitats for thousands and thousands of years, here and in
25 Europe, Asia, everywhere, and a lot of times those benefitted
26 the species around them. And I'm sure that everything man
27 does isn't necessarily bad. And so, you know, this concept
28 of managing things in their natural diversity where we
29 pretend we're leaving things alone, I think, is a good --
30 it's good to tell the people in the Lower 48 because that's
31 what they want to hear but I don't think it's truly accurate.
32 And I'm not really jumping you, I'm jumping the statement of
33 managing things in their natural diversity because I think
34 it's a very tricky concept and it gives people, somewhere, an
35 idea that we're leaving things alone when really we're not.
36 And to use that argument for keeping wood bison out of an
37 area where they existed not too long ago, where we could be
38 helping them get off the endangered species list or the
39 threatened part of the endangered species list and where we
40 could be providing an alternate food source to people where
41 the species that are important to us are gone because we
42 haven't been managing salmon in their natural diversity and,
43 you know, providing other opportunities for people to maybe
44 make a living, I think, maintaining the idea of managing in
45 their natural diversity is hurting us in this case and I
46 think we need to look somewhere else.

47
48 We can manage, you know -- we're not managing
49 the two species that are most important to us, foodwise, in
50 their natural diversity, so why would we use that as a reason

00122

1 to keep bison out when that could really help the people in
2 the Yukon Flats and help the species itself in long-term
3 recovery?

4
5 MR. HEUER: First of all, I guess I would say
6 that we are trying to manage things in their natural
7 diversity, including and I'm assuming you're talking about
8 moose and salmon, you know, we all know those species occur.
9 The natural components of the habitat, fire and flooding,
10 things like that, we monitor those habitats for contaminant
11 levels for -- you know, we monitor the wildlife populations.
12

13 But you know this introduction, it really
14 goes back to whether, you know, bison belong on the Yukon
15 Flats and they've been gone for a long time. You know, you
16 mentioned radio carbon dates, I think the most recent date we
17 have on the Yukon Flats is over a thousand years ago.
18

19 MR. FLEENER: Don't fail to mention the
20 recent data in Anchorage, though.
21

22 MR. HEUER: Yeah, there was a recent date in
23 Anchorage a couple hundred years ago, it was 450 and that's
24 been reevaluated and it's more recent than that. But, you
25 know, they've been gone a long time. We are still evaluating
26 this proposal. We don't see any reason to rush into it.
27

28 MR. FLEENER: As we see. We started in 1991
29 and we certainly haven't rushed into it.
30

31 MR. HEUER: Yeah, it's been 10 years now that
32 we've been talking about this.
33

34 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, we seem to be
35 rambling on here about this bison. We did go through a lot
36 of it. And one thing about natural diversity, is that, you
37 guys are letting beaver go. If you let them go, they block
38 streams, they poison water, they make stagnant stuff and you
39 guys need to deal with that. I don't a response for that but
40 let's move on.
41

42 MR. JAMES: Ted, I got two questions -- or
43 Greg, on your report there. I see you give \$5,000 to CATG
44 and I want to thank you there for recognizing the capacity of
45 the natural resource department in CATG there and I hope all
46 the village organizations can see this as a positive co-
47 management with the tribes and with the agencies.
48

49 My other question here is, a few years ago
50 you guys did a mortality study on calves and cows by the

00123

1 brown bears down around Beaver and there was a high
2 percentage of mortality. What was your recommendation -- did
3 you do any recommendations on trying to cut down the
4 mortality in that report there?

5
6 MR. HEUER: Yeah, thanks Davey. The report
7 that we did really didn't have any management recommendations
8 in it. We were just kind of looking at the cause of the
9 mortality and we would hope that that would be one of the
10 issues that will be addressed by the moose management
11 planning committee, that that will be one of the pieces of
12 information they look at when they're making recommendations
13 on how to manage moose. You know, basically what we found
14 was that 20 percent of the calves were surviving for the
15 first year and major causes of mortality were black bear and
16 grizzly bears. The first year it was largely black bears,
17 the second year it was pretty equally split between black
18 bears and grizzly bears. But, you know, certainly if more
19 bears were taken from the area you would assume that you'd
20 have a higher survival rate of calves.

21
22 MR. JAMES: I think this question, Craig, you
23 need to bring up again at the next natural resource meeting
24 there with the tribes and villages is that, this would help
25 the subsistence people. You can -- for economic reasons, you
26 know, if we can develop a buffer zone for brown bears,
27 certain creeks where there's a large amount of population of
28 brown bears that's taking an affect on the moose, would you
29 support that proposal, if there's ever a proposal that does
30 come through here? And the other question is that we really
31 need to get -- you know, we need to help the subsistence
32 people to get into guiding services, even though a lot of
33 them don't like guiding services, but to tap into that market
34 there so that would help them.

35
36 So thank you.

37
38 MR. HEUER: You know, we would be glad to
39 support local guiding opportunities. Basically big game
40 guiding is something that's -- you know, there's State
41 permits required for that. There's also a Refuge permit. If
42 a person had the necessary State permits then we would be
43 glad to consider them for guiding on the Refuge. We have two
44 guide areas that open periodically, like once every five
45 years.

46
47 As far as a buffer zone, you know, we've
48 already supported pretty liberal seasons on bears throughout
49 the Flats. I don't know that we could get much more liberal.
50 We'd never support some zone where you'd want to eliminate

00124

1 all bears, at least on the Refuge. Does that answer your
2 question?

3
4 MR. FLEENER: You mean you don't want to see
5 a 30 mile wide buffer zone?

6
7 (Laughter)

8
9 MR. FLEENER: But I'll answer Davey, too,
10 I'll definitely take that back to the natural resource
11 department and work with people about talking about those
12 issues that you raised.

13
14 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

15
16 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, can I ask one more
17 questions on bears, are you guys planning on conducting this
18 -- the black bear study you did in other areas? I'm really
19 interested in finding out what the bear population really is.
20 And we pretty much are just guessing based on a couple of
21 studies that have been done in other areas of Alaska and
22 we're using that information which is really not that
23 accurate and it's really hard to count bears anyways. I'm
24 wondering if you guys have made any plans to do a bear
25 population estimate in the Yukon Flats and, if not, I know
26 we've talked about it before, I think it's going to be one of
27 the components missing in overall management scheme for
28 moose, is understanding how many bears are there.

29
30 And so this genetics study has proven itself
31 to be a fairly effective way to estimate bear populations and
32 have you guys considered working on something like that and,
33 if so, then we should consider developing a joint proposal to
34 where we can work together on something like that.

35
36 MR. HEUER: Yeah, Craig, to respond to your
37 question, we have considered it. We don't have anything in
38 the words right now as far as hunting goes. You may have
39 talked to Mark a little bit about the DNA work, I mean that's
40 something we'd like to have, too, is good population estimate
41 and we'd be glad to work with you guys on a cooperative
42 project of some sort.

43
44 MR. FLEENER: Well, if we were to develop a
45 proposal through your office there, what's the funding cycle
46 that we would need to work on and when would you guys
47 actually have time to do it?

48
49 MR. HEUER: We usually submit our budget
50 requests in August and that would be for the following fiscal

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1 year starting in October. But we usually don't actually know
2 our funds until later in the fiscal year. Like I still
3 haven't gotten my budget yet for this year and we're getting
4 close to halfway through the year. So it would be next year
5 at the earliest before we could start it, not this summer but
6 the following summer, before we could start something.

7
8 MR. FLEENER: But the proposal would be
9 submitted this August and we would know next year when the
10 funding would come through?

11
12 MR. HEUER: Yeah. You know, if there was
13 something that we could do, you know, we might be able to
14 start something this year, small scale with, you know, some
15 Refuge funds that we could make available from someplace
16 else. But we wouldn't have a lot of money to do it.

17
18 MR. FLEENER: Thanks, Ted.

19
20 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Go ahead, Greg.

21
22 MR. McCLELLAN: I guess to move on to Arctic
23 Refuge, there's a handout there for activities on the Arctic
24 Refuge. Just a couple highlights. Currently there's staff
25 from Arctic Refuge in cooperation with staff from ADF&G and
26 the Yukon Department of Renewable Resources attempting to
27 capture and fit about 45 caribou from the porcupine herd with
28 conventional radio collars. It's similar to a capture
29 project that was completed last year near Arctic Village.

30
31 This winter there's been very few caribou
32 that have wintered near Arctic Village. This winter the vast
33 majority of the population has been wintering in Canada this
34 year. And the plan is to do a photo census of the Porcupine
35 Caribou Herd this year. The last census was completed in
36 '98. And also last fall in November, after the -- since the
37 last meeting, the Refuge did conduct an aerial moose survey
38 of the Eastern Brooks Range and the area was last surveyed in
39 '91 when a total of 122 moose were counted. The results from
40 this year found only 308 moose within the same area surveyed
41 in '91 so there has been a decrease in that population,
42 although the reason for the decrease is not known.

43
44 And I guess the next area I want to bring up
45 is that at the meeting in Tanana, Council member Davey James
46 had requested information on the registered guide use on the
47 Refuge and in the material I handed out there was a table
48 showing the number of animals that have been harvested by
49 clients of guides within the guide areas for the last three
50 years, '98, '99, 2000 and it's broken down to those guide

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1 areas that are south of the Continental Divide and north of
2 the Continental Divide. And then there's also a map of the
3 Refuge showing the 20 guide areas differentiated.

4
5 So I'd be happy to try to answer any
6 questions on that information.

7
8 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Any questions Davey.

9
10 MR. JAMES: I'd just like to thank you for
11 following up on that information that I requested. Thanks a
12 lot.

13
14 MR. McCLELLAN: You're welcome.

15
16 MR. FLEENER: Hey, Greg, while you're talking
17 about ANWR, I wonder if Joanne would like to come up and sit
18 next to you since she's working on ANWR, it'd be nice for
19 everybody to meet her and also hear, if you guys don't mind,
20 what she's been up to and what her goals are for taking over
21 ANWR herself.

22
23 MS. GUSTAFSON: My name is Joanne Gustafson.
24 I'm currently from Arctic Village. I'm a senior at
25 University of Alaska-Fairbanks pursuing a degree in natural
26 resources management and rural development. And while I'm in
27 school I'm currently doing an internship at Arctic National
28 Wildlife Refuge as a park ranger. And we just submitted a
29 grant to do fisheries and TEK, which is traditional
30 ecological knowledge for Old John Lake and I want to thank
31 you for approving that. And I'll be the head principal for
32 the tradition and knowledge portion of the grant so I'm kind
33 of looking forward to that. But that's kind of my job at the
34 Refuge.

35
36 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, thank you, Joanne.
37 When do you think you'll graduate?

38
39 MR. GUSTAFSON: I'm looking at another
40 semester. I was in the step-program for about a year and a
41 half and recently I've just gone to a skip-program. I get
42 confused with these two programs. But I was an intermittent
43 student and now I'll be going in full-time, permanent.

44
45 MR. JAMES: Greg, I have one question. Have
46 the tribes of Venetie and Arctic Village expressed any
47 interest in doing a moose survey on their land?

48
49 MR. McCLELLAN: Not that I'm aware of. I
50 don't know if Joanne could -- if she's heard any comment from

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1 Arctic Village or Venetie about doing a moose survey on
2 tribal lands.

3
4 MS. GUSTAFSON: We gave authorization to do
5 a caribou survey but I'm not aware of a moose survey.

6
7 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, yeah, Davey, I was
8 at Venetie not too long ago at a CATG meeting and I know that
9 there was discussion there about interest in doing a moose
10 survey, at least, on the lower part of the reservation.

11
12 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Anything else.

13
14 MR. JAMES: I have one more question. At the
15 last meeting in Tanana I brought up -- you know, are you guys
16 -- I know Paul is doing a good job with the community in
17 Yukon Flats there, are you guys planning on recruiting for
18 another RITC or.....

19
20 MR. FLEENER: RIT.

21
22 MR. JAMES:RIT for Arctic and Yukon
23 Flats?

24
25 MR. McCLELLAN: Yes, Davey. Yeah, first for
26 Yukon Flats, yeah, it is our intention of hiring a second RIT
27 in conjunction with Paul. As Ted mentioned earlier, we have
28 yet to receive our budget for this fiscal year but we will
29 assume that we'll have enough money and do plan to hire a
30 second RIT. Another hold up on that is that I'm transferring
31 to the Koyukuk/Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge the middle of
32 this month and my position is the position that supervises
33 the RIT and so in conjunction with that we're going to wait
34 until my replacement is hired before hiring the second RIT
35 for the Yukon Flats, but that is something that we are
36 intending to do and we would hope that at our fall meeting,
37 that we'll have a second RIT to introduce to the Council.

38
39 And with Arctic National Wildlife Refuge,
40 there is also interest in hiring a RIT for either or both,
41 Arctic Village and Kaktovik but again, like the Yukon Flats,
42 the Arctic Refuge doesn't have their budget yet for this
43 fiscal year but there definitely is interest in hiring an RIT
44 from either one or both of those villages for the Arctic
45 Refuge. So again, hopefully, at the fall meeting we would
46 have somebody to introduce.

47
48 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, I just wanted to say
49 that I appreciate the Yukon Flats Refuge Staff allowing Paul
50 to travel to a lot of the meetings that go in the Yukon Flats

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1 and for coming to these meetings. He's a real good addition
2 and he bring a lot of insight, especially considering he's
3 lived in almost every village in the Yukon Flats. He's
4 invaluable and I think you guys should do all you can to hold
5 onto him. He does a lot more for your Refuge than you could
6 probably ever imagine and he's just an all around good guy to
7 be around and get information from and he's personally a good
8 friend of mine.

9
10 I think as far as ANWR goes and other RIT's
11 that you hire, it will be important for us and for them, for
12 their education and for their input to allow them to attend
13 these meetings as well. And especially considering that they
14 live within the communities, it can be a real good addition.

15
16 So just appreciation.

17
18 MR. McCLELLAN: Thank you, Craig, for the
19 compliments and, yes, the Refuge is very appreciative of
20 Paul's efforts and we feel very lucky to have him work for us
21 for these last several years and we're hoping that he will
22 continue indefinitely, although, he talks about retiring but
23 we're hoping to delay that as long as possible. And, yes, we
24 think it's very productive and important for any RITs that we
25 would have for any of the Refuges to be able to attend these
26 meetings, the Fish and Game Advisory Committee meetings and
27 any other type of meetings in the villages or where there's
28 representatives of the villages at those meetings.

29
30 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, it almost seems
31 natural that he could slide up into your position.

32
33 MR. JAMES: I have one more question, Mr.
34 Chairman, maybe this could be referred to Craig, since you've
35 been working with Bob Stevens, mostly for the State, I guess,
36 last year we approved the community harvest quota for the
37 village of Chalkyitsik and can one of you two give us a break
38 down on where that is at now?

39
40 MR. FLEENER: Do you know anything about it?

41
42 MR. McCLELLAN: No, I was just going to say
43 that I know Bob, at the Fish and Game Advisory Committee
44 mentioned -- talked about it and he didn't have -- I don't
45 remember him saying any specific results. I think he did
46 mention the number of permits that were issued under that
47 hunt but I don't remember the harvest results.

48
49 MR. FLEENER: Yeah, Mr. Chair, Davey, I don't
50 have the details either. I know that there were a few

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1 glitches as there will be with any new type of a management
2 plan and I think they've sorted most of those out. There
3 were no real bad problems and I guess it seemed to work okay.
4 I still sort of don't like the idea because it's actually --
5 you know, the whole intent was to have less paperwork for
6 people and this turned out to be more paperwork and the only
7 real flexibility to it was that you can give your harvest
8 ticket to somebody else and they can go hunt for you. So
9 that's a big plus. That sort of follows with what we were
10 trying to do, where, you know, in communities we have people
11 who traditionally do most of the harvesting of species -- of
12 different species. And so with that management plan in
13 place, we can go back to that type of hunting again but
14 there's a heck of a lot of paperwork and it would be nice if
15 we could work on something that actually decreases the
16 paperwork by -- by a whole bunch, you know, that part of the
17 problem with getting reporting in our villages is that
18 there's just too darn much paperwork for people to do. And
19 if we can reduce that somehow, I think that will really help
20 the program along.

21
22 But I think it worked fairly okay. But I
23 don't know any more details than that, Davey.

24
25 MR. JAMES: Thank you.

26
27 MR. McCLELLAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I guess
28 just one quick thing, on a personal note, as I mentioned
29 earlier, this will be my last meeting before the Eastern
30 Interior Council and I appreciate working with you all the
31 last four years and I'm sure I'll see you all again. But
32 thanks for the opportunity and good luck in the future.

33
34 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you, Greg.

35
36 MR. FLEENER: Thanks Greg.

37
38 MR. JAMES: Thank you, Greg.

39
40 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I see Tetlin is up next.

41
42 MR. MERRITT: Mr. Chairman, Council members.
43 My name is Ed Merritt and I'm the manager at Tetlin National
44 Wildlife Refuge and Connie Friend, our Refuge Information
45 Technician is also here. Connie's put together a list of
46 items we hope will be of interest to the Council, she'll be
47 making our agency report. But because this was my first
48 opportunity to work with the Eastern Interior RAC, I wanted
49 to introduce myself. Prior to moving to Tetlin I managed the
50 Innoko Refuge for 10 years and worked out of McGrath and

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1 worked closely with the Western Interior RAC and I'm looking
2 forward to the Joint Western and Eastern meeting tomorrow.
3 So I'll be around today and tomorrow and I hope to get better
4 acquainted with all of you and I'm looking forward to the
5 opportunity for working with you. So with that I'll turn it
6 over to Connie.

7

8 MS. FRIEND: Mr. Chairman. Our report begins
9 with the fall moose survey that we conducted in November.
10 The Refuge staff surveyed approximately 3,000 square miles.
11 The estimated moose population in this area was determined to
12 be around 873 moose. The bull/cow ratio is 84 to 100. The
13 cow/calf ratio is 34 to 100, with .28 moose per square mile.
14 ADF&G also participated in that survey and they're still
15 analyzing the data and our biologists will have a report very
16 soon that we can forward to you so that you can have the
17 complete report.

18

19 Last year marked the first year that the
20 Federal registration permits -- or that the Refuge was
21 permitted to open a fall/winter caribou hunt in consultation
22 with the Department of Fish and Game. We had a 14 day, bulls
23 only, season with 196 permits and six designated hunter
24 permits that were applied for and issued. In that hunt,
25 there were approximately 40 to 50 bulls harvested and that
26 was from October 25 through November 7, 2000. We're still
27 awaiting data from the Office of Subsistence Management for
28 the complete results.

29

30 There was a 10 day winter moose hunt on
31 Refuge lands. There were six permits issued for that but
32 there was no harvest reported.

33

34 Our study of the distribution patterns of
35 humpback whitefish in the Upper Tanana River drainage is
36 continuing. Radio transmitters in the whitefish is now shut
37 down and will be reactivating in April. The last information
38 that we received from the transmitters was in December, so
39 about half of the fish then were located near the confluence
40 of the Nabesna and Chisana Rivers, and the other half,
41 surprisingly, were in Tetlin Lake. There is a more complete
42 report of this, I don't know if Council members were given
43 that but I have one copy and I can send you copies if
44 anyone's interested in that.

45

46 The other study that we participated in in
47 1998 and 1999 called the Organochlorine Concentrations in
48 Burbot, Livers from Fairbanks, Alaska and Kanuti, Tetlin and
49 Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges and that's been
50 completed. In this study, it was shown that there were

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1 greater contaminant concentrations from the site below
2 Fairbanks and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge than from
3 Tetlin or Kanuti Refuges, 29 burbot were sampled in all,
4 including 11 from the Upper Tanana River and overall the
5 Upper Tanana River burbot showed the least contamination.
6 However, this is only one small study and, particularly,
7 Northway still has concerns about contamination in foods so
8 there will probably be a need for more contaminant studies as
9 is being done in the Yukon Flats area.

10
11 The National Park Service, Alaska Native
12 Language Center, Duct Tape Humanities Forum and the Refuge
13 are cooperating to conduct elder interviews regarding
14 traditional ecological knowledge in the Upper Tanana. We're
15 happy to report that we are able to do those -- to offer that
16 in Athabaskan with the cooperation of the University of
17 Alaska Language Center so that in addition to being able to
18 document the history, the elders who prefer, may speak in
19 their own language and we can help to preserve some of that
20 language as well.

21
22 The Refuge has recently hired a new fire
23 management officer, her name is Mary Quork and she is
24 planning to do fire hazard reduction around the Refuge and
25 the Northway interface this summer and she'll be hiring fire
26 crews when they're not fighting fires in other places. And
27 she's also working -- we're working together to identify, at
28 least, one person from each village in the surrounding area
29 who is interested in becoming more knowledgeable about fire and
30 we're hoping to send those people to a fire-wise training
31 down in Kenai in April and there have been some people who
32 have requested that and are planning to attend from the
33 villages. And then that way the goal is to have a knowledgeable
34 fire specialist in each village and then Mary will be able to
35 coordinate more activities with them.

36
37 The Refuge is also cooperating with BLM and
38 possibly Department of Transportation to construct a world-
39 class visitor's center and administration building that would
40 house all those agencies, and it's been working very closely
41 with Tanana Chiefs and with the village councils and local
42 residents to ensure that there will be local hire and however
43 we can benefit the villages that they'll be participating in
44 that.

45
46 We're also planning an outdoor experience
47 center and that will probably be located just outside of Tok.
48 This summer we'll be hiring from four to six local youths for
49 our youth conservation corp, and summer programs.

50

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1 That concludes my report and if you have
2 questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

3
4 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Any questions for Connie.

5
6 MR. JAMES: Connie, I want to thank you for
7 utilizing your local traditional people there and
8 implementing them in your plan. Is there any population of
9 muskrats down there?

10
11 MS. FRIEND: Davey, we, too, have had that
12 same decline and we've seen it and the elders have spoken of
13 it all around us. It seems, you know, just from my
14 observation that, you know, I see a few houses, but if
15 they're coming back it's also very slow. We don't have any
16 scientific data or we haven't done any studies that can
17 verify that.

18
19 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, who is the Duct Tape
20 Humanities Forum?

21
22 (Laughter)

23
24 MS. FRIEND: Mr. Chair, Craig, that's our
25 local radio station. There's a group of people and they have
26 an art forum and a radio station and they've agreed to do all
27 the technical work so that we could have the highest quality
28 of recording that we could get. And it's kind of a way to
29 build a bridge with the Refuge and the community, they have
30 all this high tech equipment that isn't being used a lot
31 right now so by cooperating, we're pulling more people into
32 the interviews and those of us who are doing the interviewing
33 don't have to focus on the technical sides because, you know,
34 there's a lot of that if you're going to get good quality.

35
36 MR. FLEENER: Thanks.

37
38 MS. FRIEND: You're welcome.

39
40 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: That's it, Connie.

41
42 MS. FRIEND: Yes.

43
44 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

45
46 MS. FRIEND: Thank you.

47
48 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I have a request here
49 from Vince Mathews to speak about dinner so why don't you
50 come up and speak before we go onto our next deal.

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1 MR. MATHEWS: Mr. Chair, I've been dying to
2 do this for years. Basically, I'd like to talk about the
3 color of the dollar bill and how it is negatively impacting
4 the subsistence use. We used to have a gentleman come to all
5 the Board meetings that used to do that and I kind of miss
6 him.

7
8 (Laughter)

9
10 MR. MATHEWS: But basically, most of you have
11 gotten the invitation, tonight there'll be a dinner up at the
12 house. We'll have vans at the Westmark to pick you up. If
13 you have cars of your own, I have directions here, if you
14 didn't get the invitation or forgot to bring it. And for
15 Staff, there's also other invitations here. Most of those
16 were contacted by email. It would be nice by the close of
17 your meeting today to get a general idea who might be coming.
18 So that's all I wanted to talk about so it's 6:30 tonight is
19 the target time, vans at 6:00 at the Westmark and directions
20 are here. And that's all I had. And that would include
21 other staff. It was hard to do this by email.

22
23 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Vince, you're not trying
24 to get even with us are you?

25
26 (Laughter)

27
28 MR. MATHEWS: No. No, no, no, no, there's no
29 getting even. It's just an evening together to get to know
30 each other and that's it. We tried to do it last year but my
31 wife's illness prevented doing that last year when we met in
32 this location. So I'll leave invitations or whatever you
33 want to call them, directions and that with Odessa and I'll
34 be here a few more minutes if you want to pick them up or
35 whatever and then we'll go from there. And again, we do have
36 vans for those that don't have their own vehicles.

37
38 MR. FLEENER: Will we be checking weapons at
39 the door?

40
41 (Laughter)

42
43 MR. MATHEWS: I don't have a metal detector
44 and my dog is awful friendly so I don't know -- no, we won't
45 be checking for that. And then for those that have two-wheel
46 drive vehicles, you may want to park on the road, I don't
47 think you'll make it up the driveway but you might. There's
48 gravel spread out but if you don't make it the first time
49 then you're done.

50

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1 (Laughter)

2

3 MR. MATHEWS: But anyways, you can park down
4 below and walk up. The driveway has Christmas lights lining
5 them, so that's a landmark to look for and I will have them
6 turned on. I had them turned off last night but they'll be
7 turned on tonight.

8

9 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you, Vince. I
10 think we'll all go.

11

12 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, I believe next we have
13 the National Park Service, Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias and
14 Yukon-Charley. Denali can come up if they have an agency
15 report to present.

16

17 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Come on up Hollis.

18

19 MR. TWITCHELL: I'm Hollis Twitchell. I'm
20 with Denali National Park. I thought I'd take the time today
21 to talk about some Denali issues for a couple of reasons,
22 even though there's overlap with Western Interior, I think
23 your agenda tomorrow will probably be pretty full and we
24 might not have the opportunity to get this information out to
25 you, so if I could take the time now I'd like to do that.
26 Also last time in Tanana, we sort of came up on the end of
27 your program and I didn't have a chance to say much to you so
28 I'll catch up. I only have a few items so it shouldn't take
29 too long.

30

31 What I took over to the Chair was copies of
32 an ethnographic overview and assessment for the Denali area
33 that has just been completed as well as copies of village
34 histories that we had prepared for Cantwell, Lake Minchumina,
35 Nickoli and Tanana. Both the ethnographic overviews and the
36 village histories were all part of the same project. The
37 ethnographic overview was done through a contract with the
38 State Subsistence Division and they prepared that work
39 working with the communities and also working through the
40 literature that's out there and available for the Denali
41 area. The village histories, on the other hand, were
42 contracts with the tribal councils from those particular
43 communities where they were asked to participate and prepare
44 their own histories in their own words for their communities.
45 So those are appendices to the ethnographic overview and
46 assessment. Those were just finished two days ago and
47 presented to the Denali Subsistence Resource Commission. So
48 they're out for review by the communities at this time. I
49 only have one copy so if you really have a particular
50 interest I'll try to get more for you, but right now we only

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1 have 50 sets of copies to get back out to the communities for
2 their critical review.

3
4 The other item I took over to the Chair was
5 a subsistence brochure that was requested by the Denali
6 Subsistence Resource Commission. They felt that there was a
7 need to get more information out about cultural and
8 subsistence user going on in the Denali area and that we
9 needed to get this out to visitors who were new to the state,
10 new to Denali and had no idea what sort of uses that were
11 going on in the area. So this brochure is now out and it
12 will be in a folded version just like the normal brochure for
13 the Park and available to people as they enter it so they can
14 pick it up along with the brochure, the general Park
15 brochure. And I think it will probably be pretty popular.
16 It's already attracted a lot of interest just as people walk
17 by to see what's going on with it. We've utilized a lot of
18 assistance from the Denali Commission themselves in providing
19 photographs and input for the brochure.

20
21 The SRC just met two days ago. They are
22 going to have their next meeting the end of April where
23 they're going to take up back country management planning in
24 Denali. It's a planning process the Park started this year.
25 They feel particular interest in that plan since it deals
26 with recreational use into the areas that they predominately
27 use. And because it's such a major concern to them on
28 potential conflicts with recreational visitors and users and
29 to IRAs that they use, that they put it on as a major agenda
30 item so that their input can be brought in at the very first
31 phases of this planning process. So that will be coming up
32 in April when they'll get together with Park staff.

33
34 The second to the last item I was going to
35 mention was that the Park was very concerned about the
36 database that's available for our communities, subsistence
37 communities, known as the community profile studies that were
38 done in many areas by the state of Alaska in the early '80s.
39 Much of that work for our communities is very dated, 15 to 20
40 years out for many of them. And one community, in
41 particular, Lake Minchumina, had never had anything like that
42 done. We were also concerned that much of the C&T use, the
43 C&T determinations that are going through the Federal process
44 are based on a lot of this information that was, not only
45 dated, but also only looked at periods of time, generally a
46 10 to 15 year period of use and we wanted to expand that to
47 more accurately reflect the communities long-term use. So
48 the Park has funded work to be done in Cantwell, Lake
49 Minchumina, Nickoli and Talida. We, again, have approached
50 the tribal councils, first of all, to get permission to work

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1 within their communities. So far we've only been into
2 Cantwell. This winter we're planning to go to Lake
3 Minchumina and Talida. Through that process we are also
4 hiring local people to assist doing the interviews and the
5 mapping and the other components within the communities.

6
7 The last item I was going to mention is that
8 Denali is moving towards bringing an internship for someone
9 to work in cultural and subsistence resources so we will be
10 recruiting and looking for people with knowledge and
11 experience in the Denali area, with the communities and with
12 the uses, so we'll be going to the University and also into
13 the communities to try to recruit for that position.

14
15 That's what I had to present. If you have
16 any questions I'll try to answer them.

17
18 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I expect we'll see you
19 tomorrow, too, there, Hollis.

20
21 MR. TWITCHELL: Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

24
25 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair. I don't see any
26 Wrangell-St. Elias Staff or Yukon-Charley.

27
28 MR. FLEENER: There they are.

29
30 MR. MIKE: Okay.

31
32 MR. NELSON: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairman and
33 members of the committee. I'm Dave Nelson of the National
34 Park Service. I do work out of Anchorage. And Devi Sharp
35 and Eric Veetch from Wrangell were not able to attend today
36 and they send their regrets, they had some other commitments.
37 Perhaps what I could very briefly do for the committee this
38 morning is there have been regulatory proposals discussed
39 regarding the Copper River, and what I would like to do in a
40 relatively few minutes is share with you, at least,
41 conceptually, what those proposals are for the Copper River
42 as they may have some effect on this Regional committee.

43
44 I'll go through them quite briefly. Some of
45 them are what I would call, two are what I would call
46 basically a housekeeping proposal or administrative
47 proposals. In other words, they don't change how the fishery
48 occurs, they do not change the allocation of the resource,
49 they're merely cleaning up the regulations.

50

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1 And being discussed for the Copper River
2 area, the first one would be to -- in speaking about
3 steelhead trout and rainbow trout. If you'll go through the
4 regulations in the subsistence handout, you'll see that
5 constant reference to steelhead trout and rainbow trout.
6 Technically that is not correct. A rainbow trout and a
7 steelhead trout is currently recognized as being one in the
8 species, they are the same. The steelhead trout is the
9 androgenous form that goes to sea and returns to spawn,
10 resident form is the rainbow trout which remains in the fresh
11 water. But once again, this is just a housekeeping -- what
12 I would call a housekeeping or administrative proposal and it
13 would be to simply correct that in the Federal Register and
14 in the information which is disseminated to the public.

15
16 The second proposal that's being discussed is
17 at the current time the regulation pertaining to subsistence
18 fishing under Federal regulations simply states you may not
19 use live non-indigenous fish for bait. And what exactly does
20 that mean? Well, indigenous implies the word native or
21 naturally occurring, but you may not use live non-indigenous
22 fish as bait. Non-indigenous to where? North America?
23 Alaska? The drainages within Alaska or streams within
24 Alaska? And what has been discussed is simply amending that
25 regulation to say you may not use live fish as bait, period.
26 Now, I'm not familiar if any subsistence users do use live
27 fish for bait and if so it's certainly appreciated if you'd
28 call it to my attention and we can work on this regulation.
29 We can make this very understandable for everyone. But at
30 the present time the suggestion is simply to change that
31 to you may not use live fish as bait. Once again, quite a
32 straightforward proposal.

33
34 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, is that only live
35 fish or any other live type of bait allowed?

36
37 MR. NELSON: It refers only to live fish.

38
39 Now, they become a little bit more
40 complicated. In the Copper River we actually have two
41 subdistricts within the Copper River, the lower subdistrict
42 is the Chitina subdistrict and this is the area of the
43 State's dipnet subsistence fishery. Upstream from the
44 McCarthy Bridge stretching all the way up to Slana for a
45 distance of about a hundred miles, we then have the
46 Glennallen subdistrict which is primarily a fish wheel
47 fishery operated by rural residents or you may use a dipnet
48 also up there if you wish and rod and reel would now be
49 included for Federal users. One of the interesting things
50 here is that, and this is getting back -- I'm going to use a

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1 term, rainbow steelhead -- or rainbow/steelhead, that one
2 species of fish. The way the regulation reads right now is
3 if a subsistence user catches a rainbow/steelhead in a fish
4 wheel in the Glennallen subdistrict, then that fish must be
5 returned to the water, you may not retain it. Take this one
6 step further, I have not seen the permit but ADF&G asks that
7 the number of rainbow/steelhead be required on the permit.
8 So the regulations are very, very inconsistent. What catches
9 my eye is making them more inconsistent and I'm sure you
10 folks know better than I, but the rainbow trout/steelhead is
11 caught in the fish wheel and it's dead. And the way the
12 present regulation is written you would have to return a dead
13 fish to the water. And we believe that with a few word
14 changes here, we can correct that and retention would be
15 allowed. That would be a liberalization, a very slight one,
16 because for the most part it's felt that less than 100
17 steelhead are caught in the Glennallen subdistrict. But it
18 would be a slight liberalization and you know, quite frankly,
19 folks that have been doing this customarily and traditionally
20 for years would now be able to do it lawfully.

21
22 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Excuse me, sir.

23
24 MR. NELSON: Yes.

25
26 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: It seems like we'll be
27 dealing with fisheries tomorrow, is what I want to hear
28 really is about wildlife, like we have been dealing with
29 caribou and Wrangell-St. Elias, with those proposals --
30 concerning those proposals; we'll probably hear about
31 fisheries tomorrow. I don't mean to cut you off or anything
32 but we're trying to keep it like wildlife today and fisheries
33 tomorrow.

34
35 MR. NELSON: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman.
36 No, I didn't understand that, and I am not qualified to speak
37 on anything but the fisheries. I will be here tomorrow and
38 I'll be more than happy to summarize these very briefly at
39 your convenience.

40
41 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay. How much more do
42 you have there.

43
44 MR. NELSON: I think there are probably about
45 three proposals, Mr. Chairman.

46
47 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Can you do it in five
48 minutes?

49
50 MR. NELSON: I will do them in five minutes.

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1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay.

2
3 MR. NELSON: Then the second part of that
4 proposal is, for example, there is also a regulation which
5 says, if a rainbow/steelhead is caught in a net, it must be
6 returned to the water in the Copper River. And I'm sorry --
7 I'm sorry, they may be retained, a rainbow trout/steelhead is
8 caught in a net in the Copper River they may be retained.
9 The only place there's a net right now in the Copper River is
10 in that area of the State, the Chitina subdistrict, and it's
11 dipnet. So if a steelhead swims into the dipnet it can be
12 retained but if it goes further upstream and swims into a
13 fish wheel and dies it may not be retained. What we are
14 proposing to do here and what's been discussed is to change
15 that, if it's caught in the dipnet the fish is released.

16
17 I will go through this, Mr. Chairman, I
18 promised you five minutes, this one is a little bit more
19 complicated, we're just really getting into the nuts and
20 bolts of some changes. Last year the Federal Subsistence
21 Board found customary and traditional use in the Chitina
22 subdistrict for the eight Ahtna communities. However, there
23 was no season, harvest limit, et cetera adopted at that time,
24 merely customary and traditional use. This proposal just
25 fleshes out what would be a season and this is entirely up to
26 those who submitted the proposal, these are thoughts, please.
27 In the Chitina subdistrict, that there would be a season
28 which is identical to the State season, so State and Federal
29 regulations would be aligned as far as season. And based on
30 that meeting at the Federal Subsistence Board, those who are
31 eligible Federal subsistence users in the Chitina subdistrict
32 would include residents of Chitina, Cantwell, Chistochina,
33 Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake and Tazlina,
34 and residents of those communities found by the Federal
35 Subsistence Board to have C&T in this subdistrict at the
36 Board's 2000 meeting. The method of harvest, Mr. Chairman,
37 would be by dipnet as is customarily used there now by State
38 subsistence users and Federal users would be able to use rod
39 and reel because it is a legal harvest method. And the
40 Federal qualified subsistence user eligible to fish in the
41 Chitina subdistrict, in other words if you can fish in the
42 Chitina subdistrict and take your fish, would also be
43 eligible to fish in the Glennallen subdistrict. So the
44 individual would be able to fish in both subdistricts. Right
45 now it's one or the other. But we're proposing that it be
46 liberalized to either one of those. And in combination, just
47 as a note, those two districts form the Upper Copper River
48 district. Perhaps a more major change, only one permit would
49 be required for the Copper River district. What we're trying
50 to do there is to save the subsistence users administrative

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1 paperwork. Instead of having to get different permits, get
2 one permit. And the combined seasonal limit in the Upper
3 Copper River district which contains the Chitina subdistrict
4 down here and the Glennallen up here, that combination would
5 not change from what it is now, a family is allowed a maximum
6 of 500 fish. That doesn't change. The individual could take
7 500 fish if so desired from the Chitina subdistrict and then
8 done or he could take 250 there and 250 from the Glennallen
9 and then is done. So the number of fish does not change.

10
11 What I've gone through here, Mr. Chairman, is
12 that basically it's a little bit different way of doing
13 business on the Copper River, it doesn't reallocate the fish
14 nor should the number of subsistence fish caught be anything
15 significantly larger.

16
17 I do have one more very, very brief proposal
18 and that pertains to the fishery known as Batzulnetas. That
19 fishery in 2001 will be managed under the National Park
20 Service. We'll be the management agency. Regulations passed
21 by the Federal Subsistence Board dictate that people that
22 fish Batzulnetas will get a National Park Service permit.
23 What we are proposing here is a liberalization to allow those
24 people that fish Batzulnetas, which we understand is very
25 small, that they would also be able to get a permit for
26 either the Glennallen or for the Chitina subdistrict. That
27 is a liberalization. We believe that it will result in very
28 limited increase in harvest.

29
30 And with that, Mr. Chairman, I hope I came in
31 within six minutes.

32
33 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you. Is there any
34 questions? Thank you.

35
36 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

37
38 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we have Yukon-Charley
39 and if there's any staff from Yukon-Charley that would like
40 to make a presentation, if not, on the agenda, appointments
41 to the Subsistence Resource Commissions. The Council's
42 charter, one of their duties is to appoint.....

43
44 MR. FLEENER: Wait a minute.

45
46 MR. MIKE: Pardon? Sorry, Mr. Chair.

47
48 MR. TWITCHELL: Hollis Twitchell. Again, I
49 just had spoke with Dave Mills, the superintendent for the
50 Gates of the Arctic/Yukon-Charley just a few minutes ago and

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1 he just wanted to express there were two concerns
2 particularly for Yukon-Charley that they have. One of them
3 was the Fortymile Caribou Herd and he indicated that they
4 concur with the actions that you took yesterday.

5
6 The other issue they are concerned about is
7 fisheries in the Upper Yukon and lack of opportunity for
8 local rural residents in that area.

9
10 So those were the two items that are
11 prominent in their minds.

12
13 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you, Hollis. Then,
14 Donald, what Preserve do we have to make an appointment to
15 for this SRC?

16
17 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the appointments to the
18 subsistence resource commission, the Council's charter lists
19 that as one of your duties, to appoint a Council member to
20 the Denali or Wrangell-St. Elias SRC. And the reason it is
21 on the agenda item is if there's any members that are
22 currently, their term is currently expired, that's the only
23 reason I brought it up otherwise the SRCs would probably
24 provide a recommendation to have some Council member
25 reappointed.

26
27 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I thought at our Tanana
28 meeting we did reappoint Paul Starr to the Denali and then I
29 thought we already had Chuck going to the Wrangell-St. Elias
30 National Park. And I thought that was already taken care of
31 last fall.

32
33 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, yes, that is true. So
34 any terms that may come up maybe Clarence Summers from the
35 National Park Service can provide us an update on the terms
36 for each commission.

37
38 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, while Clarence is
39 coming up, I just wanted to remind Donald that if there are
40 appointments to SRCs or anything else that we need to
41 appoint, that it would be good if we get notification before
42 we actually attend the meeting and get some information on
43 the person, unless, of course, it's reappointment. But
44 because we always have new people joining this Council and
45 I've requested this before with Vince, and he provided the
46 information, and that is that we get the information well
47 ahead of time so we can read up on people who want to be
48 appointed so we're not sitting here and need to try to rush
49 through something in three minutes when the person may not be
50 who we think -- or the person wanting the appointment may not

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1 be someone we want to appoint so -- like Chuck -- no, just
2 kidding.

3

4 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, just for the Council's
5 benefit, I just needed to get an update on the Council's SRC
6 term so we'll get an idea of what's going on.

7

8 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Go ahead Clarence.

9

10 MR. SUMMERS: Mr. Chairman, Council members,
11 for your information Paul Starr's term expires November 2003
12 and that's a similar situation for the appointment of Chuck
13 Miller, his term expires November 2003. And what I'll do is
14 I'll work with Donald and provide him with information on
15 possible candidates provided from superintendents, we'll pass
16 it along to Donald so that you'll have a list of names to
17 consider when these terms expire.

18

19 I've got one other item if you'll let me do
20 this, I've got an example copy of a newsletter the Park
21 Service plans to publish, biannually, Subsistence Resource
22 Commission newsletter and I'd like your permission to pass
23 this along to you through the mail, you'll receive copies of
24 it and hopefully it will give you some background and update
25 on some of the actions taken at the Commission meetings
26 around the state. Janice Meldrum coordinates the publication
27 of this. Her name is listed on the back with a phone contact
28 number and email address. And so if you have any comments on
29 this process, the newsletter, you can pass those comments
30 along to Janice.

31

32 And that's all I have.

33

34 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, will those be
35 available via email or are you just going to be mailing them
36 out?

37

38 MR. SUMMERS: According to the information
39 that I have, yes, it will be posted at NPS, we have a web
40 site and that listing is here, but that's the goal to provide
41 information to the public and to Commission members to
42 improve communications.

43

44 Thank you.

45

46 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Any more questions for
47 Mr. Summers? Thank you.

48

49 MR. SUMMERS: Thank you.

50

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1 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Since we're almost done
2 with our agenda here and it's pretty close to lunch, I think
3 we'll just go through our agenda here and get it over with
4 and then we'll go to lunch after that and just meet tomorrow
5 in the joint meeting.

6
7 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, we just have one more
8 -- if there are any other agencies or groups that would like
9 to make a presentation to the Council, now's their time and
10 then we can go onto correspondence received and sent.

11
12 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Are there any agencies or
13 groups that would like to say something to us at this time?

14
15 MR. FLEENER: No.

16
17 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Seeing none and hearing
18 nobody, let's move on.

19
20 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, the next item on the
21 agenda is correspondence received and sent. The only items
22 that we've received for the Council is the Wrangell-St. Elias
23 and Denali SRC letters -- or recommendations they made on the
24 proposals. There is one other correspondence that we
25 received that was of interest to the Eastern Interior Council
26 and that had to do with the Yukon Flats planning committee
27 meeting and that was held in Fort Yukon, which I forgot to
28 include in our book here. So if anybody needs a copy of the
29 letter I can send the letter to them.

30
31 MR. FLEENER: Mr. Chair, just for Donald's
32 information, the reason we sort of added this into the agenda
33 was to make sure that this Council would have a -- not that
34 we need more paper but that we would receive a constant
35 supply of information that we wouldn't have to digest here,
36 all sitting here at the meetings. And that when you guys
37 receive something, a letter, whether or not you think it's
38 important, unless of course, it's a K-Mart ad or something,
39 we don't want those, but letters that may be important we
40 wanted them sent to all of the members so we can review them
41 and have time to comment on them and then when we come to our
42 meeting we'll be prepared instead of receiving seven or eight
43 letters while we're here or else completely missing
44 something.

45
46 Thanks.

47
48 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, from that we can move
49 on unless the Council members have any questions or comments
50 regarding correspondence received and sent, otherwise we can

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1 move on to Council members closing comments and concerns.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: I believe Ida Hildebrand
4 wanted to say something. State your name for the record, who
5 you are and who you work for.

6

7 MR. HILDEBRAND: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Ida
8 Hildebrand, BIA Staff Committee member. For your information
9 on correspondence, I received a copy of correspondence from
10 Alaska Wildlife Alliance and I had given it to Helga,
11 hopefully to give it to your coordinators but perhaps she
12 hasn't had an opportunity to do that yet. Basically they're
13 requesting support from tribes and villages to seek
14 legislation that would limit hunting, guiding, guiding
15 operations, transportation and outfitters and to request that
16 they all be licensed. And I believe they wrote to all the
17 villages and want village support to get new legislation to
18 be more restrictive to protect, especially moose. And this
19 is just for your information.

20

21 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Thank you.

22

23 MR. FLEENER: Thank you.

24

25 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: We'll move down to
26 Council member closing and comments and concerns. We'll
27 start off with you, Chuck.

28

29 MR. MILLER: I guess, the only really
30 concern I got is like what Craig brought up yesterday, you
31 know, with the State not being here, you know, how are we
32 supposed to do this co-management thing. I have a feeling
33 that that's going to be a big concern with a lot of people
34 here. It's kind of hard to work something out when you're
35 only working with one side.

36

37 So basically that's the only concern I really
38 got.

39

40 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Comments.

41

42 MR. MILLER: No, not really. You're doing
43 good, Gerald.

44

45 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Davey.

46

47 MR. JAMES: Yeah, that's the same concerns I
48 had there, too, with the State. Mainly that's one of the
49 reasons why we selected this location here, it's easier for
50 the State and Fed people to come here.

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1 I guess a little bit on the situation with
2 the fisheries. You know, I believe that we've done as much
3 as we could do this last three years, you know. I think
4 everybody is going to be playing their part.

5
6 I guess, you know, we really forgot who gave
7 us this wildlife and fish, he was our creator and we should
8 always thank him before the meetings. We should also bless
9 him and tell him to guide us in giving us back our resources
10 because he's the one that brought us here and he's the one
11 that gave us the resource. As much as we want to implement
12 our management plan, we still need his helping hand. And we
13 should always remember that.

14
15 Thank you.

16
17 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, Davey, I could
18 respond to that. One thing that I didn't do for -- when me
19 and Donald, we were kind of rushing through this here, in
20 developing this agenda, and I forgot a tradition that the
21 Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council does and I
22 sincerely apologize for it, we usually have an opening
23 prayer, which we didn't do and we usually have comments from
24 a local elder, which we didn't do so I apologize for that, I
25 forgot about that on the agenda.

26
27 So I'd like to hear from Jim, now.

28
29 MR. WILDE: I noticed that. I just want to
30 comment that I think the Fortymile Caribou Herd study group
31 did an excellent job. I hope that -- there's too many names
32 here -- Unit 25(D) works out as half as good as the moose
33 study there and I just hope I get some salmon this summer.
34 I'll give it to Craig next.

35
36 MR. FLEENER: Yes, Mr. Chair, I only have a
37 couple things, remarkably. But, although we've made some
38 pretty strong strides, I think with some of the decisions for
39 fishing, I'm still extremely troubled by the tremendous
40 amount of waste that goes -- that takes place off shore and
41 I think we need to continue to address that. Hopefully, we
42 do have more fish this summer. We just keep hoping and
43 praying for that. But if not, I think we're going to have to
44 keep looking and the only thing we can control is our own
45 harvest. We can't control anomalous ocean conditions. We
46 can't control the weather. Although, I think we can control
47 the weather with harp, but we can't do much for anomalous
48 ocean conditions which are probably having a lot of impact on
49 our fish. So the only other thing we can control is harvest.
50 And I think if we don't get the amount of fish back that we

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1 need, we're going to have to look elsewhere and that is with
2 off shore fishing and even if we have to go way off shore to
3 address some of these issues, I think we're going to have to
4 take the bull by the horns and do that.

5
6 I'm glad Davey brought the opening prayer
7 thing up, that's -- I was pretty shocked myself that we
8 forgot that but I think that we do have, at least one elder
9 out in the audience who could at least close us in prayer and
10 maybe provide some guidance for the future if the Council
11 would allow it.

12
13 And I think that's enough for me, I've talked
14 about my concerns throughout the whole meeting.

15
16 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Yeah, I still feel kind
17 of bad for not having the opening prayer and comments from an
18 elder from this area. But some of my concerns are going to
19 be reflected from what an elder told me in Tanana. Is that,
20 all these moose populations, moose sickness, the beavers, to
21 local fish populations, they're all being affected by this
22 over population of beaver. The block dams up, they don't let
23 fresh water go through, they leave the resident fish in there
24 without passing on, they leave stagnant water behind that
25 animals have to drink, birds, all the animals and that makes
26 the animals sick. And this beaver, it's just a rodent he
27 told me. It's just a rodent. And this little rodent took
28 over this land and it's adversely affecting us. He told me
29 this in the Native tongue, just this little rodent ruined all
30 this for us and we're all worried about these big animals
31 affecting other animals, fisheries, humans affecting that,
32 while we ignore this little rodent and now look at what it's
33 done to us. I'm just going to leave that at that. We have
34 to do something to manage this little rodent for the
35 betterment of all these other resources, including fish.

36
37 Another thing that's a great concern in my
38 area but since there's no Federal land around it, is that,
39 the moose -- there's more moose hunters now. It's getting
40 larger and larger and that's affecting our people and how
41 they put away their yearly supply of meat. We can't be
42 forever competing just to put winter meat away, our yearly
43 meat away all the time. I said this before and I'm going to
44 say it again, you guys, the agencies, both the State and
45 Federal has to distinguish between want. What I mean by want
46 is sport. Sport hunters, they just take the horns and they
47 say they're going to take care of the meat in the field but
48 they let it spoil. We don't want spoiled meat. Sure, some
49 of our villagers are thankful for getting the meat but not in
50 a spoiled condition. This shows us, our elders, that it's

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1 very disrespectful. They're not showing no respect to the
2 animal that they hunt and let it spoil in the woods, that
3 there's people in our region that's hurting by fish and
4 everything, that depends on that resource, they ain't doing
5 us no good by doing that. Actually they're hurting us more,
6 too.

7
8 You know, and I want to mention something
9 about the caribou. Since the pipeline, I always mention
10 this, since the pipeline got put in, we don't see no more
11 caribou behind Tanana. They used to come eight miles away
12 from us. And whoever said that pipeline doesn't affect
13 caribou lied to us in Tanana. That was just a blatant lie.
14 Ever since that pipeline was built, we don't get no more
15 caribou. The only caribou that comes close to us is from the
16 Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

17
18 And for the fisheries, I'm going to really
19 strive and work hard so that people in the Upper Yukon region
20 can harvest fish this year, no matter if it's pushing for
21 closures in the Yukon, even down to 12 hours. When I heard
22 this 36 hour period for two weeks, that's the first time I
23 heard it, I heard it was 12 hour periods for one week, not 36
24 hours. Where you get 36 hours is further up the river but I
25 guess I got mixed up in that one.

26
27 And I'd like to thank all the people that was
28 here and I'd like to thank my Council members, and everybody.
29 And I'd like to request Paul Williams get up after we choose
30 a time and place of next meeting to say a closing prayer.

31
32 MR. MIKE: My apologies, too, Mr. Chair,
33 about not including the opening prayers by an elder at the
34 start of the meeting. Craig brought up a good suggestion of
35 bringing up Paul Williams at the meetings end so we could get
36 a closing prayer. Anyway, the next item on the agenda is
37 future meeting plans and we have a calendar in your book at
38 the last page of your book. Just for the Council's
39 information, the fall 2001 meeting window starts September
40 1st and ends October 20th. And just for the Council's
41 information, AFN week starts during the week of October 15th,
42 so just keep that in mind. But the Northwest Regional
43 Advisory Council met last week and they haven't provided a
44 meeting date and Bristol Bay hasn't provided a meeting date
45 so this Council will have the first stab at when they want to
46 meet.

47
48 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: How does October 1
49 through 3rd sound to you guys?

50

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1 MR. WILDE: Not the first.

2

3 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: 9, 10, 11.

4

5 MR. MILLER: In Eagle.

6

7 MR. WILDE: Come on.

8

9 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: What about an

10 alternative?

11

12 MR. WILDE: Central Hot Springs.

13

14 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Okay.

15

16 MR. MIKE: Mr. Chair, before we have Paul
17 close out the meeting, we can briefly discuss for next
18 meeting some topics, the next item on the agenda.

19

20 CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: Donald, I believe that
21 the topics and stuff will come up through this meeting
22 tomorrow and through what we covered the last two days, we
23 could just recap on that later.

24

25 MR. FLEENER: From discussions.

26

27 MR. MIKE: Okay, Mr. Chair, thank you.

28

29 MR. WILLIAMS: (Prayer - In Native)

30

31 While during our short lives, our
32 forefathers, our fathers and our mothers, they always told us
33 to put God's name, our creator down there first when we're
34 going to do something. They always say that every time,
35 every day, they remind us to remember the great spirit and
36 the maker of this heaven and earth and to make sure that
37 everything we do is in his name. We pray for success in our
38 co-management, we pray today for that. We pray for
39 understanding among each other. We pray for working towards
40 what we're doing for the good of everybody, not only today
41 but for the future for our decedents to enjoy the resource
42 that we have today. And that, by God's help we will also
43 have fish for the future through our effort and his help, we
44 say this in his son's name, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

45

46 Amen.

47

48 MR. FLEENER: Motion to adjourn.

49

50 MR. WILDE: Second.

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CHAIRMAN NICHOLIA: It's adjourned then.

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)
* * * * *

